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Reasons to celebrate CHRISTMAS

Volume 30 Issue 11

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"For it is written: 'As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.'" – Romans 14:11

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Celebrate Christmas with the children of the persecuted Church

—by Open Doors Southern Africa

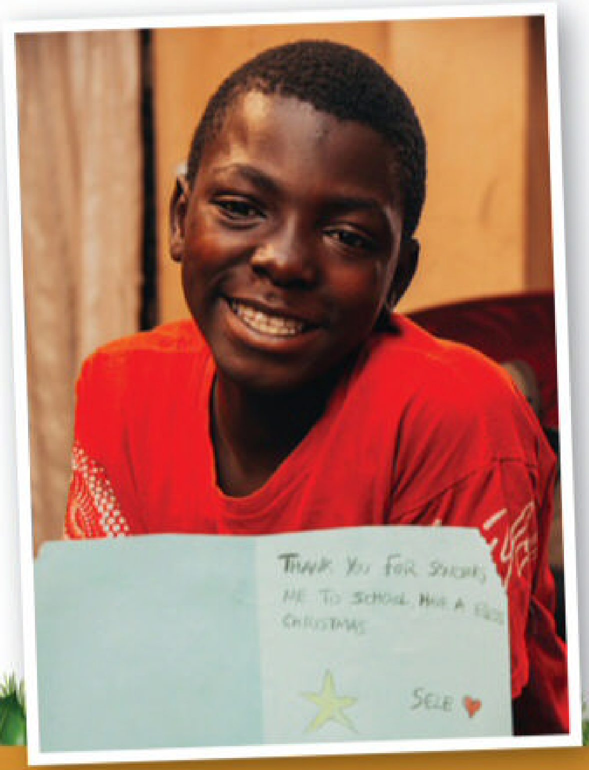
For Christians across the globe, Christmas marks the sweet celebration of our Saviour's birth. However, for children like 13-year-old Sele and his family in Nigeria, it is a bittersweet celebration. Each year they are painfully aware of the empty seat at their Christmas table – for many of us this might also be the case this year…

The expression on Sele's face was priceless when he opened his special Christmas gift. The new shirt, trousers, and an illustrated Bible were just what he wanted. This Christmas gift, which was made possible by the support of Open Doors partners, will bring him hope and joy for the rest of the year.

Father killed for his faith

Sele is one of many Christian children who have lost loved ones to persecution. His father, a farmer who provided in all the family's needs, was killed in 2011 in an attack on Christians in their town. Although Christmas is a poignant time of the year for the family and they love to celebrate the birth of Jesus in their community, they are also missing his father desperately.

> **You can spark hope in the lives of persecuted Christian children like Sele this Christmas.**



"The loss of my husband has hit our family hard. When he was alive, we were living peacefully. After he was killed because he was a Christian, I decided to hold on to Jesus for our daily needs. My concern is just to feed my children and make sure they go to school," says Cecelia, Sele's mother.

Opportunity to go to school

Sele is a diligent student who loves going to school and completes his homework obediently every day. Open Doors helps by paying the tuition at his Christian school. Here it is safe to pray and share his faith openly. Except from getting the opportunity to study, the teachers also help him to grow as a Christian and understand the faith that cost his father his life. After school he also works very hard on their farm to help his mum put food on the table.

"I am so thankful for the opportunity to go to school. My dream is to save lives and help people, so I work hard to become a doctor in the future. Thank you to Open Doors and their partners for paying my school fees. May God bless you," says Sele.

A proud mom

Cecelia is proud of her son's positive attitude and achievements, as well as grateful for the help in sending Sele to school. She says: "I want to thank God for Open Doors, who is helping and visiting me constantly. They always support me with Sele's school fees. His life is changed by the opportunity to go to school. The hope and joy that he experiences, is an inspiration to others around him. I am so grateful for the help from our brothers and sisters in Christ."

A bright future

Thanks to the support of believers all over the world, Sele and many others like him are blessed with a special Christmas and a bright future – Sele can study hard at school and feel hopeful for the future. Please pray that the Lord will protect Sele and his family so that they can be salt and light in their community.

You can spark hope in the lives of persecuted Christian children like Sele this Christmas with a gift to transform their lives and give them a brighter future – please make use of the banking details below. ▪

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Christmas is a difficult time for children who experience persecution because of their faith in Jesus.

Bring light into the darkness for persecuted children this Christmas with the gift of a brighter future.

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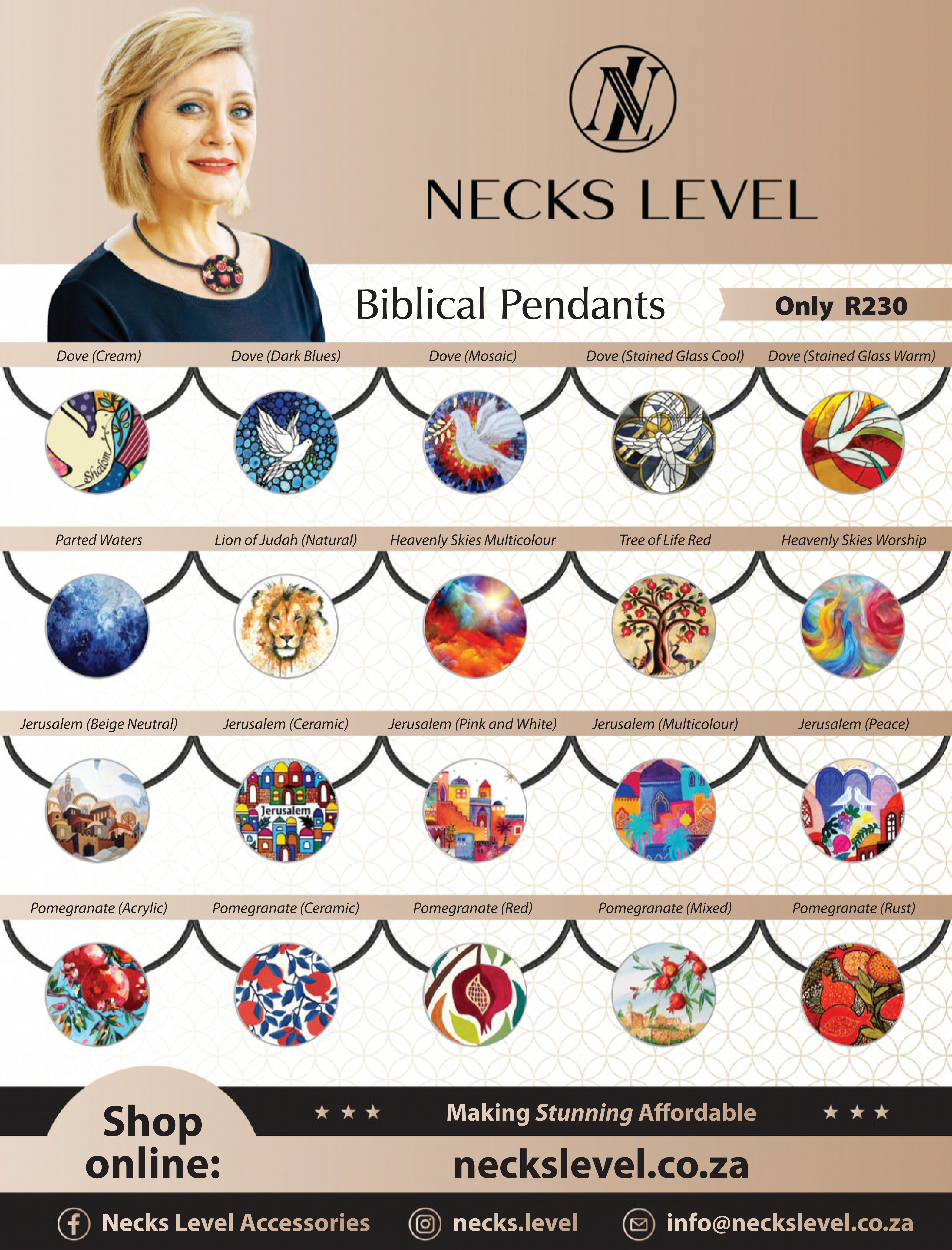

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CONTENTS

Volume 30 ■ Issue 11

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Every Knee Shall Bow Before The King

34
14 Biblical Facts About Angels
44
The Earth Is Alive & Vibrant With His Glory
20
38
TRAPPED – Under A Tractor!
30

Why Do We Celebrate Christmas?

What Does The Bible Say About Demons?

COVER STORY:

34 Every Knee Shall Bow Before The King Of Kings

NEWS:

78 – 81

FEATURE STORIES:

06 Time To Sparkle – A Devotion
38 Why Do We Celebrate Christmas?
40 What Should Parents Tell Their Kids About Santa Claus?
44 14 Biblical Facts About Angels
48 What Does The Bible Say About Demons?
50 Casting Out A Demon Of PTSD: Deliverance Came To The Psych Ward
58 Leaving A Lasting Legacy
64 Anointed & Appointed – Interview With Edward Ackerman
66 God Judged Jesus – Tamryn Klintworth
69 The Christian Leaders' Forum
71 Schools Face Pressure To Implement Department's CSE Content
74 7 Reasons For Owning A Home Stone Mill – Your Staple Food Solution
76 The Rise Of The Micro Entrepreneur – Hykie Berg

MISSIONS & TESTIMONIES:

01 Celebrate Christmas With The Children Of The Persecuted Church
12 Testimony: With Him, All Things Are Possible
17 'I Know It Was You Lord' – Short Reader Testimonies
27 Desperate Communities Need Jesus – Gordon Claasen
28 The Voice That Quietens Depression – CBN South Africa
30 Trapped Under A Tractor! Joos Engelbrecht's Second Chance
33 The Greatest Christmas Gift! – Sophia Roman
60 TWR Africa – Year End Challenge 2021
62 30 Gospel Campaigns In 5 Days – CfaN
72 Kidney Failure, Dialysis & Eczema – Hilary Jackson's Healing Testimony

COLUMNS:

04 Editor's Note – Christmas Is The Best Time To Share The Gospel
07 Changing Your Life Forever – Grant & Theunisina Neyt
20 The Earth Is Alive & Vibrant With His Glory – Hermien Van Den Bergh
26 Mastering Technology & Social Media – Tendai Chitsike
29 Love Yourself – Gillian Fraser
29 3 Points To Ponder On Effort In Marriage – Gawie De Lange
53 Entering The Gates! – Janet Brann-Hollis

REGULARS:

07 Salvation Prayer (English And Xhosa)
08 Letters To The Editor
18 Commentary Of Romans 8:28
22 Ask Val – Biblical Answers To Tough Questions
24 Bible Fun: Quiz And Word Search
42 Characters Of The Bible: Women In The Lineage Of Jesus
52 Getting To Know God: The Holiness Of God
54 When Your Lamp Is Trimmed – Gerrie Bester

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JOY! Magazine seeks to serve the whole Body of Christ and therefore does not necessarily subscribe to all the views of its contributors.

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Vision

JOY! Magazine seeks to glorify God by educating and informing Christians of a Biblical Worldview and applying the Lordship of Jesus Christ to all areas of life.

The Best Time to Share the Gospel

> *"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*
> **– Isaiah 9:6**

Wow, it's almost Christmas again! This year seemed to slip by so fast, with all its ups and downs. Last year this time we were in the thick of lockdown and the second wave of Covid. It was a very sad and stressful time. Churches were closed and there was very little Christmas 'spirit'. But the one good thing was that it made many people think about death and their eternal future. We will never know how many people cried out for salvation in their darkest hour, but – if only they knew that they could and if they knew who to call out to.

Many have come to Christ in these dark times

We, the children of God, carry the responsibility to share the gift of eternal life with others. We must speak of who Jesus is, why He was born, and what He achieved for mankind. If we don't tell people, who will? One can't just hope that a non-believer will randomly walk into a church or by some remote chance pick up a book or a copy of JOY! Magazine, or watch a YouTube clip and discover Jesus. In the Bible we have been given the model of evangelism and we need to take this mandate seriously. We can't believe it's only the responsibility of a trained evangelist or pastor.

Jesus Christ is the only answer

It is amazing that since the proliferation of social media, everyone suddenly has an opinion and preaches the Gospel according to their own interpretation and limited understanding. The theological errors are astounding, and millions of souls will end up in hell because of this. Jesus was sent to the earth to become the sacrifice for sin and to offer salvation. He is the only mediator between man and God. *"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* – Acts 4:12

Christmas is the best time to share the Gospel

Christmas time gives us the perfect opportunity to present the true reason the world celebrates this day. Pray and ask the Lord to use you this Christmas. Thank Him for His gift, and promise to share Him with others. We will all have to give an account to God one day for what we did and said whilst on this earth. Make your life matter.

God bless you, Erin

Editor

Values

Strive for excellence and integrity in all things • Provide interesting, accurate, and honest reporting at all times • Respect all Christian denominations • Encourage reader participation • Take personal responsibility • Always seek to unite the Body of Christ • Evaluate everything in the light of the Bible • Provoke readers to fulfil the Biblical mandate to be salt and light in society • Motivate readers to action • Be solution-focused

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Volume 30 Issue 09

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My recovery from MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

MENTORING A Biblical Responsibility

THE WORLDVIEW OF THE TALIBAN

A FATHER'S WORDS

October 2021

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"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." - Jesus

Volume 30 Issue 07

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

HOW CLOSE IS CHRIST'S SECOND COMING?

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW ON DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

Exclusive Interview SOUTH AFRICAN ACTOR, 'MOSES' IN THE CHOSEN

MOZAMBIQUE – HOPE IN HARD TIMES

"I have chosen you and will not throw you away. Don't be afraid, for I am with you..." – Isaiah 41:9-10

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DEVOTION

Time to Sparkle

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." **– Matthew 5:16**

The Christian should stand out like a sparkling diamond. He should be wholesome, poised, courteous, gracious, but firm in the things he does and does not do. He should be radiant and refuse to allow the world to pull him down.

The greatest need of Christians is for disciplined living. The Apostle Paul said, *"Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."* – Romans 12:2

God calls you today to dedicate your life to Christ and surrender totally and completely to Him, and live the life of discipleship that Jesus Christ asked for and expects from us.

"Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did." **– 1 John 2:6**

Thoughts:

1. **How does your life differ from that of the average non-believer?**
2. **What can you do to ensure you are living a disciplined Christian life?**

This devotion was written by the late Nico Bougas in a Devotional Journal that JOY! Magazine published. Nico was a phenomenal teacher and a much-loved friend of our ministry.

SALVATION PRAYER

Jesus, I believe that You died
on the Cross for me.
There You were wounded
for my transgressions,
You were bruised for my iniquities;
and the punishment for
my peace was upon You.
I have been like a lost sheep,
I have turned to my own way,
but I believe that God laid my
iniquity upon You. You died for me.
Then You rose from the dead,
You ascended into Heaven,
and now seated on
Your throne as Lord of all.
Jesus, forgive me.
I now turn away from my sin
and put my trust in You.
Fill me with Your Spirit, cleanse me,
and take me as Your own.

AMEN

* * *

XHOSA

Yesu, ndiyakholwa ukuba
wandifela emnqamlezweni.
Apho walinyazwa ngenxa
yeziphoso zam, Walinyazwa
ngenxa yobubi bam, ubetho
loxolelo lwam lube phezu
kwakho. Ndifana nemvu
elahlekileyo, ndiye ndalahleka,
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nje uhleli esihlalweni
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Yesu, ndixolele. Ngoku
ndiyaguquka esonweni sam,
ndibeka ithemba lam kuwe.
Ndigcwalise ngoMoya wakho,
ndihlambe, undamkele
njengomntwana wakho.

AMEN

Changing Your Life Forever

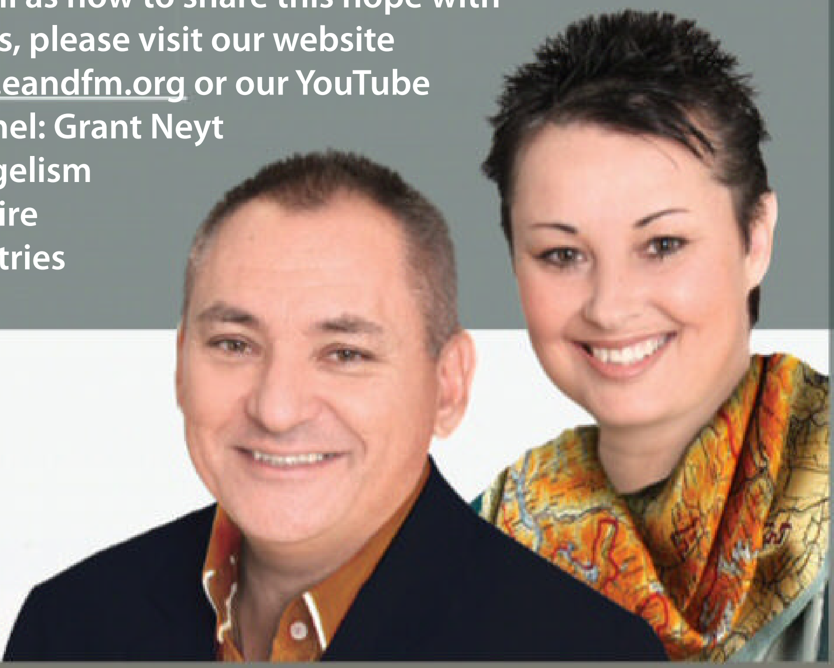
Happy Christmas precious friend. Thank you for faithfully buying and reading the wonderful JOY! Magazine. Our prayer for you and your family is that you will experience the manifold blessing of Christ during this special time. In all of the festivities let us focus our attention on the following:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." – John 3:16-17

Hallelujah! Is this not the best news?

Jesus Christ was sent to this world so that you and I may receive the gift of eternal life. This news puts everything into perspective. Please share this wonderful news with the world. Now, if this is new news to you, there is a prayer you will find alongside this column. Please pray this prayer by faith. It will change your life forever. ■

For more in-depth teachings on this subject, as well as how to share this hope with others, please visit our website www.eandfm.org or our YouTube channel: Grant Neyt Evangelism and Fire Ministries



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Letters to the Editor

Dear readers, we love to hear your thoughts on the stories that we publish, what is going on around the world, and what the Lord has placed on your heart! Email your letter through to editor@joymag.co.za for a chance to be featured – please try to keep letters to 150 words as we have limited space.

Why do Christians suffer?

Your article on 'Why Do Christians Suffer?' was really good and helped me to accept a few things. My eyes were really opened when it reminded us of how much the disciples of Christ suffered. In that light, most Western Christians cannot even comprehend suffering. I know the Middle Eastern brothers and sisters suffer terribly – but we cannot complain… yet! Sadly, with all the new laws being passed and the world changing like it is, who knows how long it will be like this? Make the most of your freedom – times are changing.

Sindiswa

FEATURE

Why do Christians suffer?

Our ultimate hope is not in this world or in gaining earthly comfort; our hope is in God and in His greater plan.

Suffering, no matter its cause, can be used by God to complete us in Him (Rom 8:28 30).

Suffering strips us of artificial or temporal securities and forces us to dig more deeply into the Word.

JOY! Magazine puts a lot of effort in

I received a copy of JOY! Magazine at a ladies' meeting recently. It really lives up to its name. I was so blessed and read it cover to cover. Thank you for your professional presentation of all the articles. I can see that you have dedicated people on your team. Keep up the great work.

Sylvia Creighton

I write to God in my journal

My favourite thing, from a very young age, has always been to spend as much time as I could writing in my journal. It was so therapeutic to my soul, mind, and body. My all-time favourite was writing to God. As I grew older, I became totally obsessed with writing to Him. A few days ago I was thinking to myself that I would have to ask God to please help me with my writing, as I felt this may not be pleasing to His will. I turned the TV onto a programme, "Day Star". The preacher highlighted how God said in Jeremiah 30:2, *"Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel saying, 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.'"* As I have had many experiences of God speaking to me, I believed that God was satisfied with me writing in my journal. It was a heartfelt message from God!

Gayle Wilson

Does God want me to have kids?

I want to ask your readers a question. We have been married for six years and we have been trying for a baby for four years. It has been a frustrating, disappointing, and heart-breaking time. I have prayed for years and people have prayed for us – plus we have had fertility treatment, but nothing. Do you think God doesn't want us to have children and perhaps adopt or foster? We are at the point of accepting that we are not going to be biological parents and were never meant to be. Please can other readers share their experience if they have overcome this sad state of affairs. I think they should write to JOY! so that other struggling couples can also read about it.

Desperate *(name withheld)*

Lawlessness is becoming a norm

Thank you for your recent article on the lawlessness that prevails around us. The Bible

Midgey's Moments

"Midgey, how time flies!" This is what my Arnie (Aunty Trish) said the other day, "It's almost Christmas!"

She read me this quote by Benjamin Franklin, "Time is the stuff life is made of. We waste it, spend it, and save it; we have time on our hands, or we make up for lost time; some people have all the time in the world, while others are running out of time; and when our time is up, we exit this world." That seems like time in a nutshell to me! Although us doggies, we have a sense of time, we don't really understand the idea of it.

Arnie found on Google that "the actual time" is only mentioned 26 times in the Bible, so it seems it maybe was not as important then as it is nowadays. However, time was important to Jesus – but He never rushed or struggled to play catch up.

Thank you Jesus that You are always on time!

Woofs & licks,
Midgey

Send your letters to editor@joymag.co.za

predicted that this would happen in the latter days, and sadly we now witness this behaviour often – not just in South Africa, but worldwide. Christians need to stay immersed in the Word of God so that we can stand strong and not react to this terrible behaviour in haste. We need to pray for patience and wisdom. Many eyes will be upon us to see our response. When you sometimes feel like you can't deal with all these changes in society anymore – remember that you were born into this generation for a time like this, and that God doesn't make mistakes – He chose you as He knows you can cope. Please stay in the Word and be strong in your faith.

Bernard Strong

What does the Bible say about LAWLESSNESS?

To be lawless is to be contrary to the law or to act without regard to the law. Laws are necessary in a sinful world (1 Tim 1:9), and those who choose to act lawlessly further sin in the world. The word for "lawlessness" in the Bible is often translated "iniquity." According to the Bible, the root of all lawlessness is rebellion.

Sin is lawlessness

First John 3:4 defines sin as lawlessness: *"Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness."* To commit sin is to be lawless; that is, the sinner breaks God's law. In this way, lawlessness is a rejection of God. Satan, who models the ultimate rejection of God, will one day empower the Antichrist, called *"the lawless one,"* whose rise to power *"will be in accordance with how satan works."* – 2 Thessalonians 2:9

Christ will have the ultimate victory and will eliminate lawlessness forever.

Christians are to be law-abiding

Lawlessness is contrasted with righteousness in verses such as Romans 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:14, and Hebrews 1:9. The righteous, who have the nature of Jesus Christ, hate the deeds of lawlessness. Lot, a godly man living in Sodom, *"was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard"* – 2 Peter 2:8. The psalmist said, *"I abhor the assembly of evildoers and refuse to sit with the wicked"* – Psalm 26:5. Christians are to be law-abiding (1 Pet 4:15).

Lawlessness leads to chaos

When a society ignores the law, lawlessness is the result, and chaos ensues. The time of the judges after Joshua's death was marked by upheaval, oppression, and general disorder. The biblical historian puts his finger on the reason for the tumult: *"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit"* – Judges 21:25. The riot in Ephesus is a good example of lawlessness in action (Acts 19). The rioters were confused and unsure even of why they were rioting (v 32); in their lawlessness, they were ignoring proper legal channels (v 39) and, of course, breaking the law (v 40).

Humans are to govern ourselves

God has a purpose for establishing human government: *"to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right"* – 1 Peter 2:14. Rulers are God's appointees to maintain order and promote righteousness in a civil society. *"Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves"* – Romans 13:2. In other words, lawlessness is condemned in Scripture.

God's grace overcomes all sin

The Bible connects man's lawlessness and rebellion against God with our need for God's forgiveness. In Romans 4:7, Paul (quoting Psalm 32:1) says, *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered".* God's righteousness is imputed to us at salvation, and God forgives us of our lawlessness: *"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more"* – Hebrews 10:17, quoting Jeremiah 31:34. Christ died on the Cross *"to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works"* – Titus 2:14. Our lawless deeds resulted in Christ's death, but God's grace overcomes our lawless hearts.

Believers will shine like the sun

In the judgement many will stand before Christ claiming a connection with Him that exists only in their own minds. They will rehearse their good deeds done in His Name, only to hear Jesus declare them to be *"workers of lawlessness"* whom Christ never knew (Matt 7:23). At that time, those who practice lawlessness will be cast *"into the blazing furnace,"* while those who are covered by the righteousness of Christ *"will shine like the sun"* – Matthew 13:41-43. Christ will have the ultimate victory and will eliminate lawlessness forever. ■

68 JOY! MAGAZINE

It is well with my soul!

I saw this information on Facebook recently and think that JOY! Magazine should publish it, as it is very interesting.

Did you know that the song "It Is Well With My Soul" was written by a successful Christian lawyer, Heratio Spafford? His only son died at age 4 in 1871. In 1872, the great Chicago fire wiped out his vast estate, made from a successful legal career. In 1873 he sent his wife and four daughters over to Europe on a summer trip on the ill-fated SS Ville du Havre. Since he had a lot of work to do, he planned to follow them later. The ship sank and he lost his four daughters, with his wife being the only survivor. She sent him a famous telegram that simply read, "SAVED ALONE..." On his return home from Europe, his law firm was burnt down and the insurance company refused to pay him. They said, "It's an act of God." He had no money to pay for his house and no work, and he had also lost his house and his family. Then, while sitting and thinking about what was happening to him, being a spiritual person he wrote a song – *"Whatever, my Lord, You have taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul."*

My dear friend, a good attitude will determine your altitude. When you look at your life, career, job, or family life, what do you say? Do you praise God? Do you blame the devil? A good attitude towards God makes Him move on your behalf. Just sit down and say, "Today, God, it is well with my soul. I am thankful I had a peaceful sleep. I am thankful I am alive with possibilities. I am thankful I have a roof over me. I am thankful I have a job. I am thankful that I have family and friends. Above all, I am thankful that I have the Lord Jesus Christ on my side."

Be blessed and don't be envious or shocked when others are prospering – you don't know what they have been through to get there (tests, trials, and tribulation). So, thank God for what you have. "Little is much when God is in it. It is well with my soul!"

Touch someone's life with this message. If God is for us, who can be against us? God bless to all and have a wonderful day.

Margi

God bless Theo Wolmarans!

I recently picked up a JOY! Magazine at our

»

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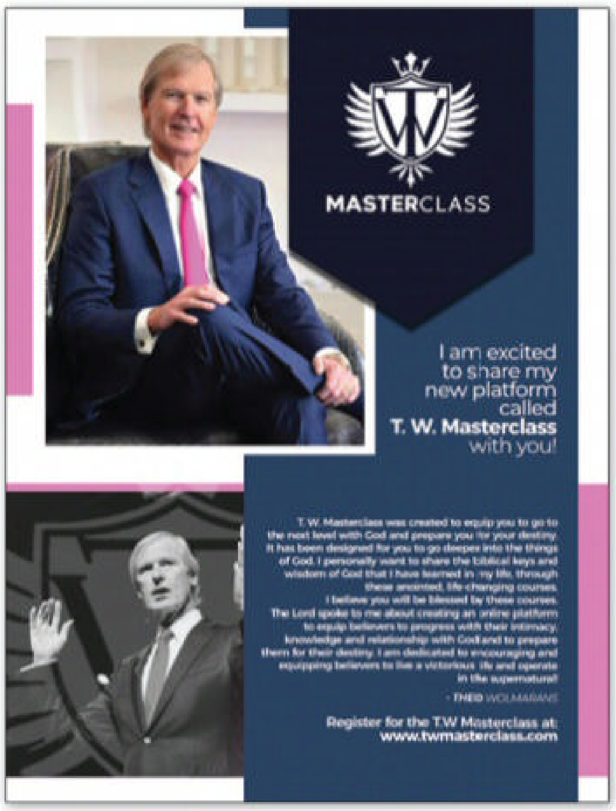
Letters to the Editor

local supermarket and was delighted when I opened it up and saw a picture of Ps. Theo Wolmarans. He has faithfully served the Lord for so many years. I am 64 years old and when I was a young lady I was invited to a church service of his in a tent outside of Edenvale, Johannesburg. It was the first time I had ever seen people healed and so many people went up for prayer afterwards. Imagine my excitement to see him in JOY! Magazine. I am so blessed that he is still well and preaching the Gospel. He is a giant in South Africa. Thousands and thousands of souls have been saved through this man. What a testimony!

Rosemary Carron



Thank you Janet!

Janet Brann-Hollis is a wonderful prophet of God. She has an incredible gift and is a blessing to the Body of Christ in South Africa. I always open up on her column first as she motivates me. Please keep her messages coming. She is very deep and her words cut into my spirit. Thank you Mama Janet – keep preaching in spirit and in truth.

Khanyiswa Qhirama

Take a stand against injustice

I grew up in the 1950's / 60's at the height of Apartheid. We lived humbly in a rural Christian society on a farm. Life was simple, honest, and free. On our farm we lived without boundaries, everyone was equal, respected, and accepted. Once a week my daddy and I would take a trip to the local general store to purchase supplies. Here things were different. There were two entrances. The one entrance would read "Whites" and the other was labelled "Non-Whites". My daddy would take me by the hand. This week we would enter the "Non-Whites" entrance. We stopped at the counter – greetings were said and the inevitable comment was made, "You are in the wrong side of the store." My daddy would innocently remark, "Really? But I am just coming to buy goods. Am I in the wrong place?" The reply was always the same, "No you are just on the wrong side of the store. You need to go outside and enter by the other entrance." My daddy would stand and scratch his head. "But I see all the items that I need right there on the shelf. How can I be on the wrong side of the store? There is the paraffin, there is the soap, there is the sugar, there is the tea, there are the screws, and there is the oil? I even see the sweets for the children." The reply was sometimes polite and sometimes irritable, "Yes the items are all there, but you are on the wrong side of the store." My daddy would simply smile and reply politely, "But I prefer to be on this side of the store this week. Will you serve me please?" After a deep sigh, he would eventually be served. After the payment he would raise his hat and greet politely, saying, "Thank you. See you next week."

You see, he was using his freedom to take a stand against prejudice and against injustice. He did it quietly, respectfully, but determinedly. He made his quest for freedom for all without explosives.

Why am I writing this? Because here we

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are again. At a crossroads of prejudice and injustice. Once again our land finds itself divided. Some will have chosen security over freedom and have been vaccinated against Covid, even though some didn't want this substance pumped into their bodies, they will be applauded. But for those who have chosen not to rush the matter, they will be treated as though they are selfish enemies. There will once again be no-go areas. If you are fully vaccinated, you will be allowed this entrance, this service, this privilege. If you are not fully vaccinated, you will be denied. In some places churches are only open to those fully vaccinated. Yet the invitation from Jesus is, *"Come to Me all…"*

So, I wonder? Will I be taking my grandchild by the hand and entering in at the fully vaccinated entrance, defying security to conform? Or to the not vaccinated area in order to take a stand? Most choose security above freedom. I still choose freedom. The very moment we think that we are better than others because of something we did or did not do, we hurt Christ.

It is so sad that this virus seems to have derailed or distracted us from Christ and our mandate. We are to *"seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* – Matthew 6:33. Let us not grow confused as the multiplicity of choices can paralyse us and tie us into knots created by perplexities concerning guidance. The command by our Saviour dispels confusion and seeking Him first will surely bring us back on track, and He will assist us with the decisions. Most of us would like it if God told us exactly what to do, where to go, how to choose, and when. Jesus, on the other hand, simplifies life by giving us clear direction and purpose.

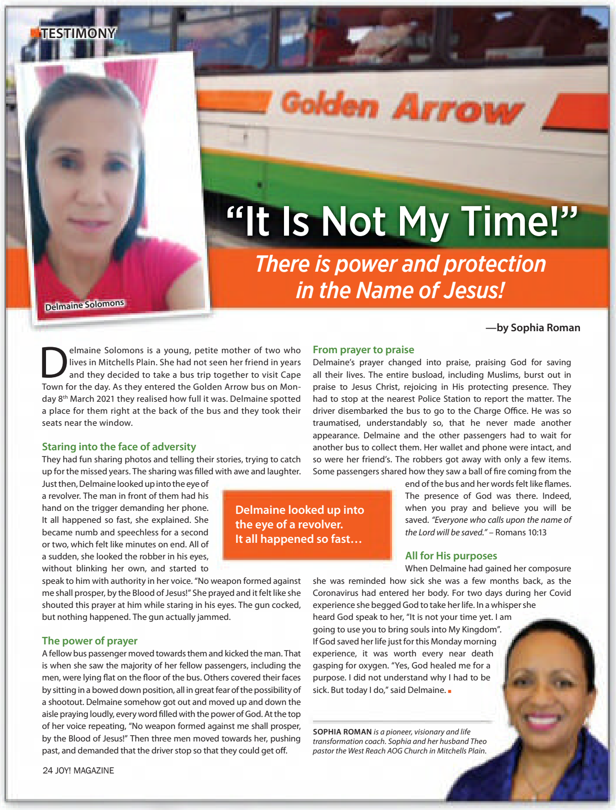
Let's all determine that our heart condition is good, that our motives are pure, and that our basic direction is pointing us "True North". In the end, what really matters is that we seek God's Kingdom and righteousness. Maybe for most this is simply too simplistic! But it is still true. Put God and His glory first in everything and then there will be few difficulties with His divine guidance. The lost need the Gospel, the sad need hope, the poor need love, the grieving need comfort. Vaccinated or not, let's get back on track. United, in good conscience choose to do the will of God. No matter what – let us not be distracted from being Christ-like.

Rita Edkins

Thank you for sharing testimonies

Thank you for a great magazine, and thank you so much for sharing the very powerful testimony of the brave young lady from Mitchells Plain. May her testimony reach the four corners of the earth! I've been photostatting it, placing it in plastic sheathes, and sharing it with domestic ladies and waitresses to encourage them and equip them! Please share more powerful testimonies like this in the future. Thank you for keeping us informed and updated on many important subjects.

Penny Laue



"It Is Not My Time!"

There is power and protection in the Name of Jesus!

—by Sophia Roman

Delmaine Solomons is a young, petite mother of two who lives in Mitchells Plain. She had not seen her friend in years and they decided to take a bus trip together to visit Cape Town for the day. As they entered the Golden Arrow bus on Monday 8th March 2021 they realised how full it was. Delmaine spotted a place for them right at the back of the bus and they took their seats near the window.

Staring into the face of adversity

They had fun sharing photos and telling their stories, trying to catch up for the missed years. The sharing was filled with awe and laughter. Just then, Delmaine looked up into the eye of a revolver. The man in front of them had his hand on the trigger demanding her phone. It all happened so fast, she explained. She became numb and speechless for a second or two, which felt like minutes on end. All of a sudden, she looked the robber in his eyes, without blinking her own, and started to speak to him with authority in her voice. "No weapon formed against me shall prosper, by the Blood of Jesus!" She prayed and it felt like she shouted this prayer at him while staring in his eyes. The gun cocked, but nothing happened. The gun actually jammed.

Delmaine looked up into the eye of a revolver. It all happened so fast…

The power of prayer

A fellow bus passenger moved towards them and kicked the man. That is when she saw the majority of her fellow passengers, including the men, were lying flat on the floor of the bus. Others covered their faces by sitting in a bowed down position, all in great fear of the possibility of a shootout. Delmaine somehow got out and moved up and down the aisle praying loudly, every word filled with the power of God. At the top of her voice repeating, "No weapon formed against me shall prosper, by the Blood of Jesus!" Then three men moved towards her, pushing past, and demanded that the driver stop so that they could get off.

From prayer to praise

Delmaine's prayer changed into praise, praising God for saving all their lives. The entire busload, including Muslims, burst out in praise to Jesus Christ, rejoicing in His protecting presence. They had to stop at the nearest Police Station to report the matter. The driver disembarked the bus to go to the Charge Office. He was so traumatised, understandably so, that he never made another appearance. Delmaine and the other passengers had to wait for another bus to collect them. Her wallet and phone were intact, and so were her friend's. The robbers got away with only a few items. Some passengers shared how they saw a ball of fire coming from the end of the bus and her words felt like flames. The presence of God was there. Indeed, when you pray and believe you will be saved. *"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."* – Romans 10:13

All for His purposes

When Delmaine had gained her composure she was reminded how sick she was a few months back, as the Coronavirus had entered her body. For two days during her Covid experience she begged God to take her life. In a whisper she heard God speak to her, "It is not your time yet. I am going to use you to bring souls into My Kingdom". If God saved her life just for this Monday morning experience, it was worth every near death gasping for oxygen. "Yes, God healed me for a purpose. I did not understand why I had to be sick. But today I do," said Delmaine. ■

SOPHIA ROMAN *is a pioneer, visionary and life transformation coach. Sophia and her husband Theo pastor the West Reach AOG Church in Mitchells Plain.*

24 JOY! MAGAZINE

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A Testimony of God's faithfulness

> *"Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."*
> **– Deuteronomy 31:8**

—by Farirayi Kahwemba

The positive transformation upon my life over the past 12 years – from arriving in South Africa with virtually nothing to gradually rebuilding my life, finding joy, peace, and happiness – has left me convinced that God is always at work in our lives even if we may not realise it.

Economic collapses caught up with me

Born and raised in Zimbabwe's capital city of Harare in 1980, I chose a career in print media as a sports journalist. All was well until the economic hardships that befell the country from around 2001 onwards made life very difficult for everyone and resulted in the closure of many businesses.

The effects of this economic collapse, largely blamed on the seizure by the Zimbabwean government of white-owned farms and the subsequent sanctions from western countries that followed, soon caught up with me and many other young people of the "born-free" generation.

Uncertainty, confusion, and hopelessness

The closure of *The Sunday Mirror* – a national newspaper that had hired me as a senior writer – was a huge financial blow to me and my wife. Uncertainty, confusion, and hopelessness are some of the emotions I felt as I struggled to ponder how I would take care of my wife and our one-year-old boy.

My dependence on alcohol increased to cope with the stress of losing my job and our only source of income. Strong objections to this destructive habit from my wife and my mother – who was now burdened with the responsibility of taking care of all of us – fell on deaf ears.

> My dependence on alcohol increased to cope with the stress of losing my job.

Pessimism took over

Having been led to accept Jesus Christ as my saviour by my mother during my teenage years, I felt that God was far away from me during this time as hopelessness and pessimism took over. I chose a life of reckless abandonment by wasting our meagre savings on excessive alcohol consumption.

The effects of this behaviour – I still remember being robbed of my possessions at one point while I was in a drunken stupor – caused unbearable despair and anguish to both my wife and my mother.

Pressing forward in faith

What I was not aware of was that the two of them had chosen an effective way of getting me back on the straight and narrow road: PRAYER.

1 Peter 5:8-9 describes the devil as a roaring lion and advises Christians to stand firm against him by being strong in their faith. Expressing this faith through prayer and believing that all the devil's strongholds can be broken by the Name of Jesus Christ became a rallying point for these two women and moved God to start removing the obstacles in my life.

Farirayi Kahwemba

I hope that those reading this testimony will discover that letting God take over your life will make it possible to overcome any mountain or circumstance you might face in life.

A house of prayer

Each night, our home became a house of prayer. During intensive, long prayer sessions, the belief – spoken repeatedly to us by my mother – that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28) became a promise that ignited a glimmer of hope in me.

Moving to South Africa

As intentions of reviving my journalism career outside Zimbabwe took root, many months of odd jobs here and there, selling homemade peanut butter and a collective prayerful effort by the whole family culminated in my arrival in South Africa in 2009.

Life away from home – let alone the country of your birth – can be daunting as it comes with having to learn new cultures, languages, and often adjusting to different weather conditions.

Through perseverance, I have experienced the Lord's faithfulness.

Making the most of a new start

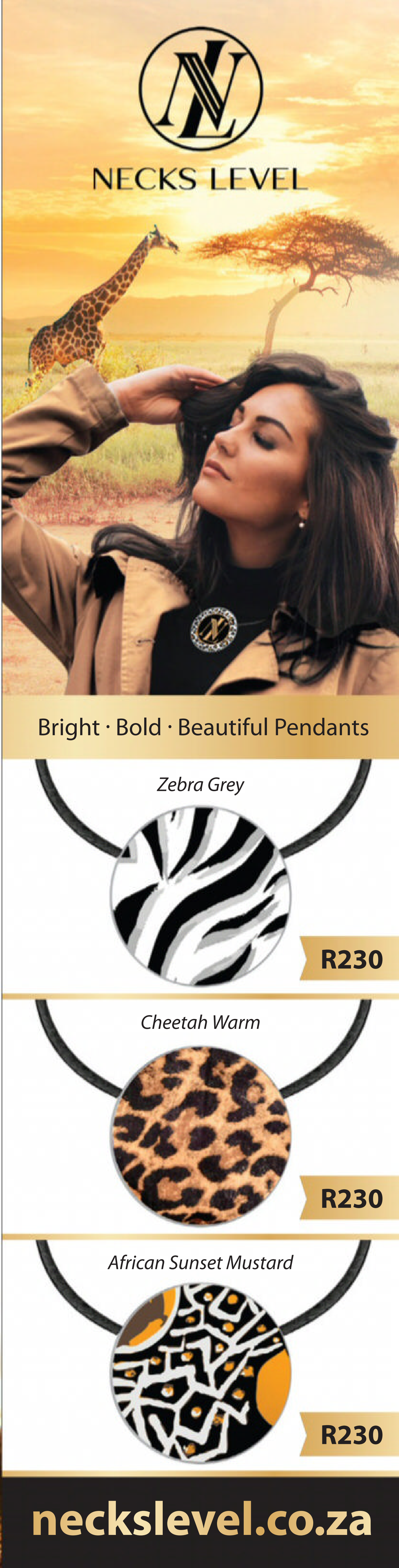
However, the fear of South Africa's high crime rate – which, in retrospect, I now realise was exaggerated by many sections of the international media prior to my arrival here – was soon overshadowed by the polite response I received from the person who directed me to the nearest public telephone.

Moments later, my brother-in-law – who had been living and working in Rustenburg for a few years – welcomed me into his home. I was determined to make the most of this new start.

The journey was not easy

But it was not easy, starting over never is. Short term employment stints in the farming and construction sectors, although physically exhausting, gave me a sense of self-worth as I was able to send money back home.

By praying, we move the Lord to pave a way for us. Deuteronomy 31:8 teaches us that God is always in control, even when we are uncertain about our future. Joshua assured the »



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WITH HIM, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

A Testimony of God's faithfulness

Israelites – when they were terrified about their future – that God will go ahead of them and will never abandon them.

God paved the way

I believe that our prayers in Harare, prior to my arrival in South Africa, moved God to "go ahead" for me – even before it became clear to all of us at that time that I would eventually travel here.

Less than a year after arriving in South Africa, I managed to secure employment with a local newspaper and – by God's grace – my career began to blossom. Apart from the honour and privilege of having written for several publications, God has also blessed me with a better life and a tolerant community that has accepted our family (my wife and three children) as one of their own.

Rededicating my life to Christ

I work at a company where God and prayer are the focal point of how things are done. At our local church – the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) Word of Life Assembly – our family has found a spiritual home of prayer and fellowship. It is at this church that I rededicated my life to Christ and was baptised.

> God does not look at our past and will always accept us if we repent and turn to Him.

Depending on Him alone

Looking back, I thank the Lord that for many years now, I have not taken any alcohol because I have learnt to depend on Him alone to solve, or help me face, any challenge that may come my way.

Through prayer and perseverance, I have experienced the Lord's faithfulness after deciding to further my education and today I am on the verge of entering the last stages of completing my studies towards a BA Communication Science degree with the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Blending into a new life

Like many African countries between them, Zimbabwe and South Africa share many similar cultural traits. Learning to speak Setswana and being exposed to many aspects of the Afrikaans culture has also improved my interactive skills and helped me blend into the way of life this side of the Limpopo River.

All things are possible

In Matthew 19:26, Jesus told His disciples: *"Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."* I hope that those reading this testimony will discover that letting God take over your life will make it possible to overcome any mountain or circumstance you might face in life.

He will be with you

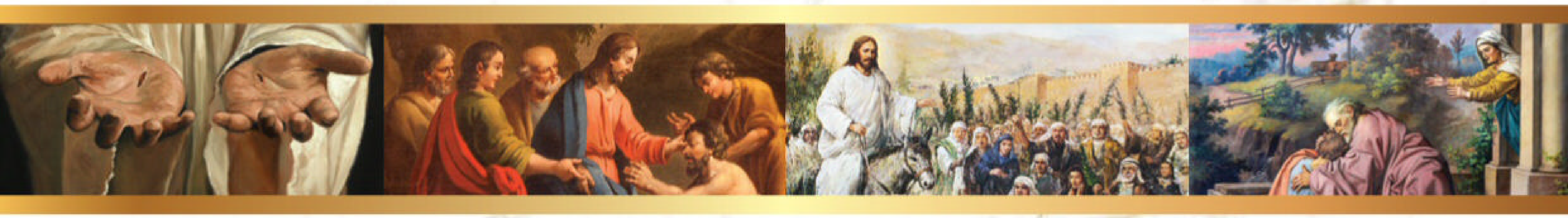
God was with David as a young boy as he was approaching Goliath. He was with the Israelites when they thought they were trapped between the Red Sea and an army of Egyptians. He was with Job during the most difficult part of his life, and He will be with you if you make Him the centre of your life by accepting Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

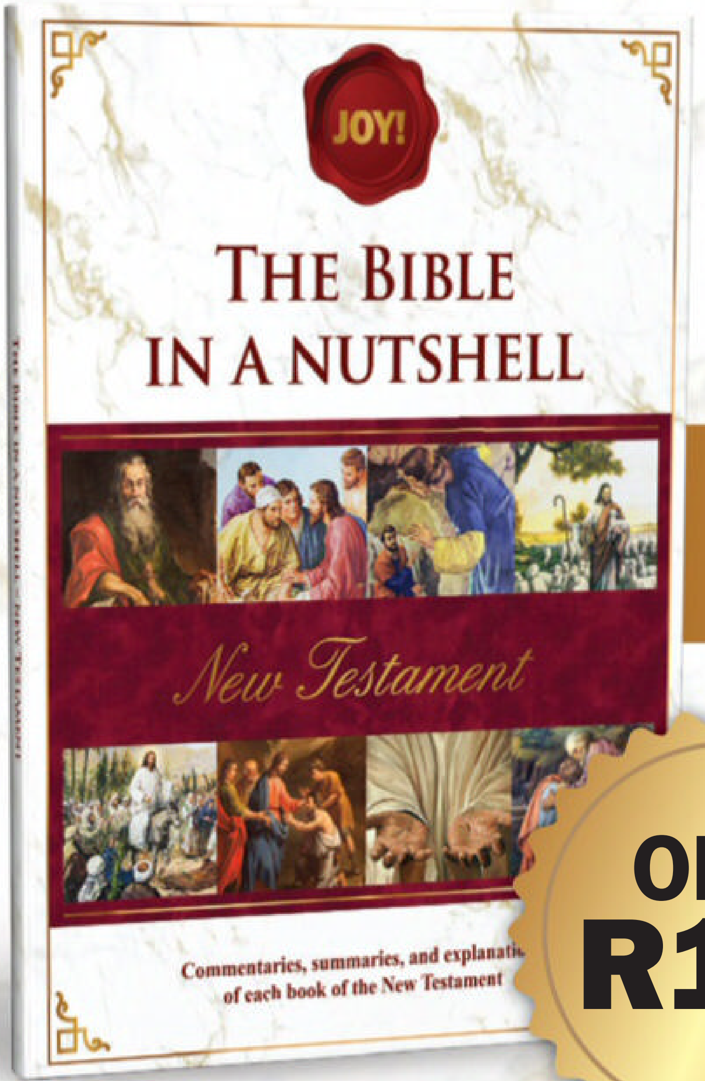
God does not look at your past

God promises us – through many verses contained in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible – that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

By completely placing our trust in Him and choosing to be led by Him through the Holy Spirit, we can face life's challenges with hope and encouragement. God does not look at our past and will always accept us if we repent and turn to His loving mercy and grace. ■

FARIRAYI KAHWEMBA *is based in Rustenburg. Email fkahwemba@googlemail.com*

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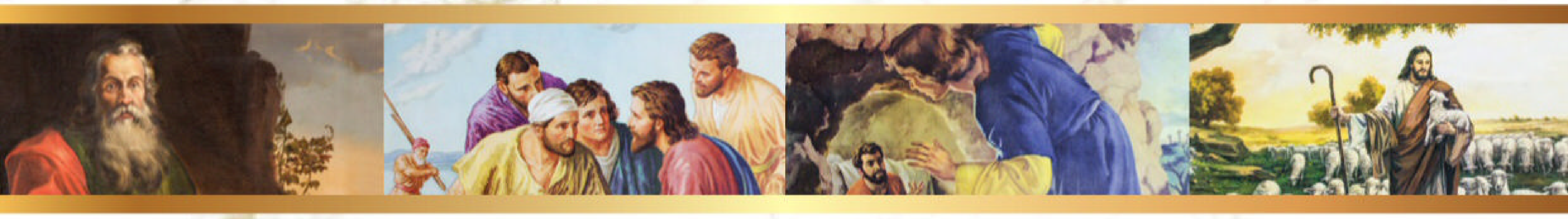

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I know it was you Lord!

SHORT MIRACLES FROM JOY! READERS:

If you would like to have your short miracle featured – no matter how 'big' or 'small' – please email info@joymag.co.za and keep your word count to 400 words.

A few years ago I decided to run an Alpha course at my home (my attempt at personal evangelism). I did not know who to invite, but felt led by the Lord nevertheless. I live in an estate and acquired a list of all the homeowners. I began to pray over the list for a few months. I needed six couples to join the course. After three months, I felt confident enough to approach the people I had marked on the list.

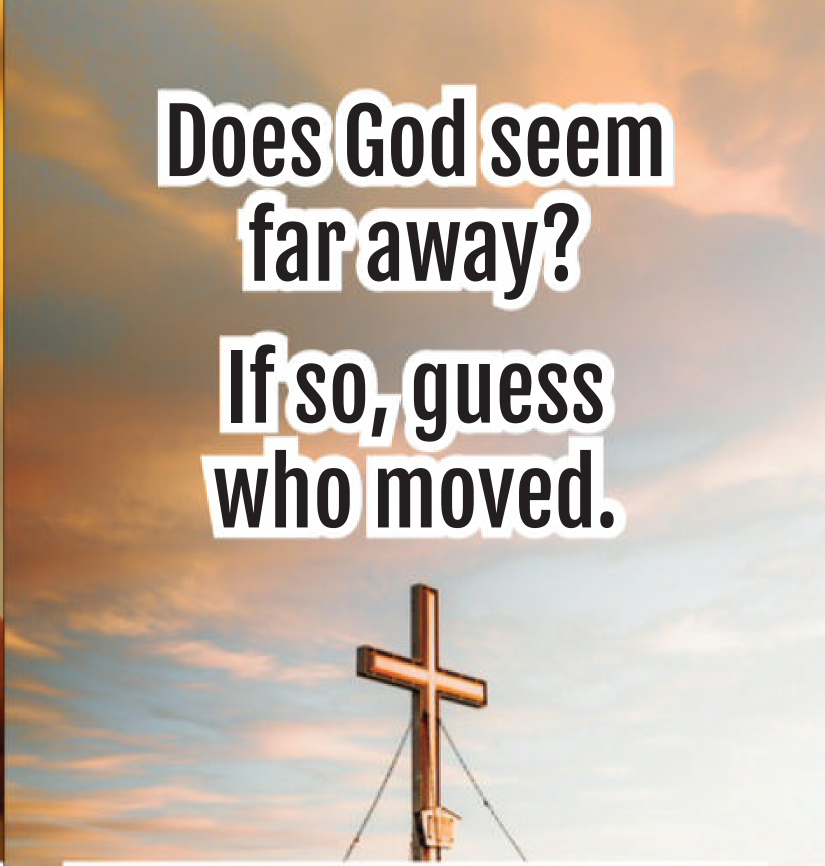
A leap of faith

I drove to the homes of the people, knocked on their doors nervously, and invited them to an introductory dinner at my home. I had no idea where any of the people stood spiritually or what sort of reaction I would receive, but I was trusting that those whom I had felt led to approach would respond positively. To my surprise, five of the couples accepted the invite – but I was still one couple short. I really struggled to find the last couple.

Trusting in the Lord for guidance

I remember going into my room and praying, asking God to please help me find the last couple. That night I went to sleep and had a dream. I dreamt of a house with a cross of light hovering above it. I woke up and knew instantly that this was a spiritual dream from God. I remembered the house in my dream so clearly, and drove around our estate looking for it. Imagine my delight when I found the very house that I had seen in my dream. I was astounded that the detail was exactly the same! I had no idea who lived there, but I stopped the car and excitedly went to their door. I invited the couple to the dinner, and was delighted when they said they would attend. They gave their hearts to the Lord on the first night. Six months later, they went on to hosting their very own Alpha group!

I have had a few "spiritual" dreams over the years, and they have increased and strengthened my faith tremendously. I love that the Lord uses different ways to teach us to trust Him so deeply.



Does God seem far away?

If so, guess who moved.

Oswald Chambers advises us, "Unless in the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in, you will work on a wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your Father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God." When God is all you have, then He is all you need.

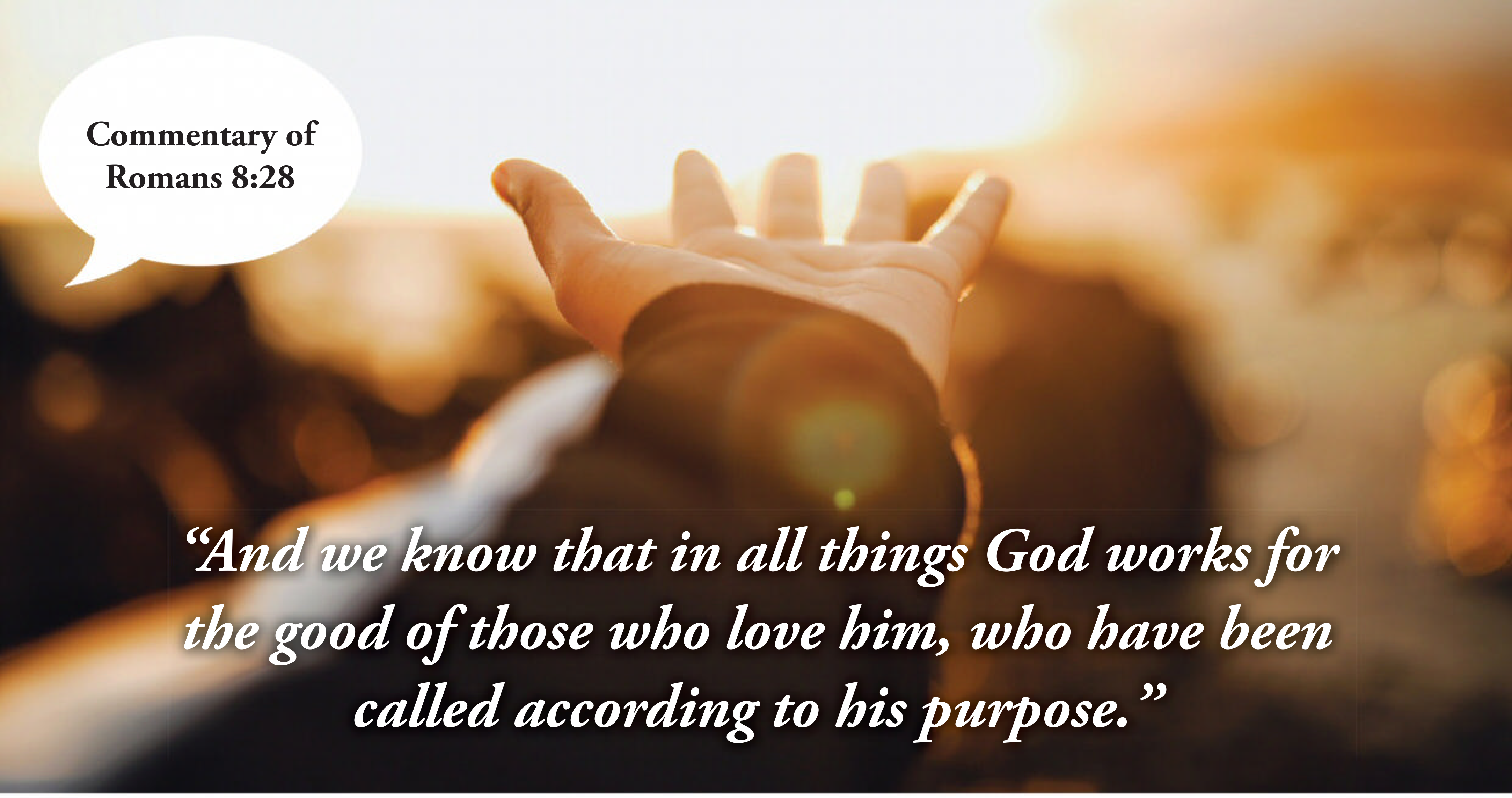
God is always near

"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" – James 4:8. The Bible also says that *"God inhabits the praises of His people."* Good news! God is never more than a prayer or praise away. Tommy Barnett reflected, "The deeper I dig, the deeper He digs." To increase value, get to know God. Our prayer should be, "I want to be in Your will, not in Your way."

'Here I am Lord'

Our heartfelt cry to God can be the same as Isaiah's cry: *"Here I am, send me"* – Isaiah 6:8. Consider the words of W.H. Atken when he said, "Lord take my lips and speak through them; take my mind and think through it; take my heart and set it on fire." We must not only give what we have, we must also give all of what we are to God.

This column is an extract from John Mason's book, *Why Ask Why*, and was shared with permission.



Commentary of Romans 8:28

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

God is sovereign over the universe. Since the very beginning of the world, He has been enacting a plan that includes the free agency of humankind side-by-side with His sovereignty over everything. It is a paradox, but it is one of the most biblically-verifiable facts of our existence (John 6:64-64; Rom 14:12).

This is good news!

This is astonishingly good news because it means that even when terrible things happen to us, there is a purpose in it that involves our good. Even when we sin and face the consequences for our sin, He somehow uses the consequences for our good, and even manages to use our sin for our good, though we are still held accountable for it (Gen 50:20).

It is your choice how you live your life

Life can be lived two ways – constantly fighting against God and His purposes, or humbly submitting to whatever His plan is for you. The first way is torture for yourself and may lead to destruction, and the second way is the abundant life that Jesus promised (John 10:10). *“For those who love him,”* it is all for our good, and given eyes to see that, we can live joyfully no matter the circumstances.

Breaking down the key parts of Romans 8:28:

1 *“And…”*

This falls in a section of Romans where Paul is describing the way our suffering in this present age in the fallen world has great purpose. The culmination is our glorification (Rom 8:30).

2 *“…we know…”*

We know this by faith. If we truly know it, it will affect the way we experience trial. Some psychologists say that life has no meaning except what we give it. For Christians, we give it the meaning that God gives it. God does everything for His glory and for our good (Isa 48:11).

3 *“…that in all things God works…”*

Jesus said, *“My Father is always working”* – John 5:17. Not only is He always working, but He is working in all things. Not even satan is able to work apart from God’s allowance (Job 1). One should never think that God is not in a situation. We can be mistaken about the role He is playing and what His will is, but He is always there (Josh 1:9), and always working.

4 *“…for the good of those who love him,”*

Everything God does is for ultimate good in that everything He does brings Him glory and honour. But for those who love Him, it means our good as well. For those who don’t love God, His purpose may end in their harm, as even rebellious sinners going to hell ultimately glorifies Him and highlights His own goodness, holiness, and mercy towards those who repent (Rom 9:21).

5 *“and are called according to his purpose.”*

Sometimes the word ‘calling’ is used to describe one’s chosen vocation, especially a calling to ministry. But the most powerful use of the word is to describe one’s salvation (Rom 8:30). No one is called apart from the purpose of God. No purpose of God for the believer will lead to anything but good for the one who loves Him and is called. ▪

This commentary was written by Connect Us, an online ministry that shares short explanations and commentaries. Visit connectusfund.org

“MUM, PLEASE HELP ME TO DIE…”

When things are terribly tough we need testimonies with enough muscle in them to encourage us, bring us peace, and comfort us with the knowledge that there is nothing that can happen that thwarts the grace God gives …

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The Earth Is Alive & Vibrant With His Glory

—by Hermien Van Den Bergh

We celebrate Christmas and gaze with renewed awe at the beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ, the benefits of the Cross, and the power of His resurrection. Many people believe that Jesus died for sinners only, but that is heresy. According Hebrew 2:9, Christ died not just for sinners, but also for everything, including all creation. Colossians 1.20 states, *"And through Him He reconciled all things to Himself. Having made peace through the blood of His cross.'*

God's beautiful creation

Creation is alive and vibrant with His love, and the earth is flooded with His Glory. The wonders, magnificence, majesty, diversity, and power of the natural world is astounding. The macro and micro details of creation speaks of God lavishing His love and ingenuity on humanity.

Caring for the natural world

But it is not only humans that should be grateful and in awe. The Word says that everything that has breath praises the Lord – let mountains, hills, and rocks break out in praise and let the trees in the field clap their hands in praise. The concept of the natural world praising God is foreign to our finite human minds, but it does not mean it is not true or possible. It does however bring to our attention the value of the natural world and that we should care for it properly!

Look to the Cross

The Bible calls us to live a balanced life, and the design of the Cross gives us a clue how to do it. Picture the beams of the Cross. It runs vertically and horizontally having four points; left, right, up, and down. The horizontal beam, left to right, speaks of *"I love my neighbour as I love myself."* The vertical beam, pointing upwards, speaks of our love for God. The fourth part, pointing downwards and planted in the earth, speaks of the need to love the earth too in order for us to live a healthy balanced life.

Abusing the earth is sinful

Many Christians focus on loving themselves, God, and people – but have a blind spot to lovingly manage the earth and all its creatures. They see it only as a resource, which often leads to abuse. Many don't seem to realise that to love the earth IS to love God and people. Neglecting and abusing creation with greed and cruelty has devastating consequences, leaving current and future generations in despair. Abusing the earth is sinful and calls for repentance that produces fruit consistent with a changed heart. ■

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Bible Quiz Answers

Page 25

1. Luke Chapter 2
2. God with us (Matt 1:23)
3. Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-5)
4. The Angel Gabriel (Luke 1:26-38)
5. An Angel of the Lord (Matt 1:21)
6. One (Luke 2:9)
7. There was no room (Luke 2:7)
8. The wise men (Matt 2:1-2)
9. In a manger (Luke 2:7)
10. Gold, incense and myrrh (Matt 2:11)
11. 8 days (Luke 2:21)
12. Bethlehem (Luke 2:4)
13. Egypt (Matt 2:13-23)
14. Isaiah
15. John the Baptist, by around six months (Luke 1:36)

ARE YOU READY?

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Christmas is really a pagan celebration, and I don't believe Christians should get involved in all the revelry, Christmas trees, and financial splurging.

A. The true meaning of Christmas is far from pagan! It is a celebration of the coming of the Messiah into this world to save lost humanity by personally paying the price for sin. What a magnificent reason to celebrate and what an incredible opportunity to share the Gospel! While Christians can have no part in the worldly concept of celebrating Christmas and should not be caught up in senseless materialism, we should also not lose sight of the fact that this is a God-given opportunity to share the truth of the Gospel. The Word enjoins us to use every opportunity to share the Gospel. Paul wrote: *"I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some"* – 1 Corinthians 9:22. We are to *"preach the word ... in season and out of season"* – 2 Timothy 4:2. Let's make full use of this time of celebration to put Christ back into Christmas while we still have the opportunity in South Africa. The Christ of Christmas is coming back again.

Do you think we are living in the Last Days and that the Rapture of the Church could happen in our lifetime?

A. No one knows precisely what God's programme for the "end times" is. He has given us a great deal of information, but even some of the information He shared with men like Daniel and John were not passed on to us. John, for example, was told NOT to write down some of what he saw (Rev 10:4). I believe even if God did give us all the facts, our very fallible brains would be unable to compute it properly in any case! Spiritually mature Christians understand this and realise their assessment of the facts must be held with great humility. What we do know is that there is coming a day when *"we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever"* – 1 Thessalonians 4:17. (Original Greek: snatched up, plucked, pulled, taken by force. Latin translation: *rapturo*. English: rapture). Christ is coming again, and we must be ready. That is the bottom line! It could happen at any moment!

Are heaven and hell real places? Or do we make our own heaven and hell on earth by the way we live?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ taught a great deal about both heaven and hell. People change their religious philosophies, but He said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words will by now means pass away"* – Matthew 24:35. Jesus said He came from heaven where He shared His Father's Glory (John 17:5). He claimed to be *"The Living Bread which came down from Heaven"* – John 6:51. He taught that heaven is a real place, and He should know! He also taught that hell is a real place. In fact, Jesus spoke more about hell than about any other subject. He warned men and women strongly to avoid that dreadful place of torment (Mark 9:42-48). The worst troubles this world has to offer will fade into insignificance when the reality of that world is experienced. Conversely, *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him"* – 1 Corinthians 2:9. There is a heaven to gain, and a hell to shun! ■

Val Waldeck is an author, kindle publishing consultant, and Bible teacher. If you need help writing, or with your book, see valwaldeck.com

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."

Job 12:7-10

WORD SEARCH

AMOS 8:1-8

J	R	Y	N	D	J	L	F	R	U	I	T	E	A	S
E	S	E	L	A	C	S	A	N	D	A	L	S	O	P
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L	E	E	E	E	D	P	G	C	B	O	N	O	R	M
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DEAD
DECEIT
DWELLS
EPHAH

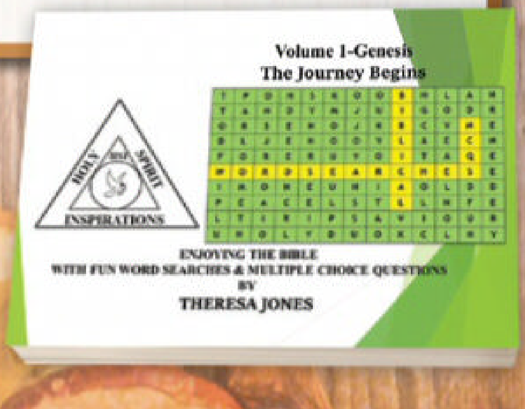
FALSIFYING
FRUIT
LAND
MOON
NEW
PASS

POOR
PRIDE
SABBATH
SANDALS
SCALES
SELL

SHEKEL
SILENCE
SILVER
SONGS
SUMMER
SWALLOW

SWORN
TEMPLE
THROWN
TREMBLE
WAILING
WHEAT

This word search was crafted by Theresa Jones, a Cape Town-based author. Theresa has recently brought out her own fun book of Biblical word searches and multiple choice questions. If you would like to order a copy for only R90, email holyspiritinspirations@gmail.com



Volume 1-Genesis
The Journey Begins

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THERESA JONES

Test Your Bible Knowledge

CHRISTMAS

See how many of these you can fill in before checking the answers on page 21. After you test yourself, try reading the questions aloud to a friend or family member and see how they do!

1. In the Bible, where do we read about the birth of Jesus?
2. How is the name "Emmanuel" interpreted?
3. Which city did Joseph and Mary travel to for the census?
4. Which Angel appeared to Mary when she was with child?
5. Who told Joseph to name the baby Jesus?
6. How many Angels appeared and spoke to the shepherds?
7. Why were Joseph and Mary not able to stay at the inn?
8. Who followed a star to find baby Jesus?
9. Where was Jesus laid after He was born?
10. What gifts did the wise men bring to baby Jesus?
11. How many days after the birth of Christ did Joseph and Mary give Him the name Jesus?
12. Where was Joseph originally from?
13. Where did Jesus' family flee to from Bethlehem?
14. Which Old Testament prophet had the most to say about the birth of Jesus?
15. John the Baptist was the cousin of Jesus, but who was older, according to Luke?

Answers on page 21

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Virtues of Cultural Engagement:

Mastering Technology & Social Media

—by Tendai Chitsike

If we are to make a godly impact on the prevailing culture, we must approach technology quite differently to the world we live in. To be sure, there are some blessings that technology and social media have brought, and for this we can be grateful to God. Akin to the invention of the printing press, technology has allowed information – including Biblical material – to be accessed almost immediately and across the world. During the height of lockdown, I was able to 'attend' an online conference by the Colson Center that featured the world's leading Christian leaders and apologists.

Technology has many benefits

Seekers and believers in closed and persecuted nations are able to hear the Gospel and read Christian literature that would otherwise be impossible for them to access. Through social media, believers around the world are able to connect with other believers and learn from them, with physical distance no longer a barrier. Of these and other things we can be most grateful.

Yet, despite these benefits, the downsides of a life dominated by technology and social media are colossal. Pornography has become so much more accessible – even to young children with a smartphone or tablet. Social media has taken on a life of its own, dominating the sense of worth of impressionable young and old participants. Netflix-binging and gaming occupy the lion's share of the weekends and weeknights of many. Stunningly, one survey found that the demographic that were most involved in regular gaming were men between the ages of 25 and 35.

> **The downsides of a life dominated by technology and social media are colossal.**

Superficiality is a curse today

If we have somehow managed to run the gauntlet of such addictions and come out unscathed, we should nevertheless look deeper and see the ways in which technology still draws us away from a more meaningful life. In his classic work, *Celebration of Discipline*, author Richard Foster poignantly declared that "Superficiality is the curse of our age…" If this was true at the time of his publication, in 1978, how much more true is this today?

The rarest commodity in the world

Similarly, author and social commentator Os Guinness wrote: "Today, we know that in the era of the internet, focused attention has become the rarest commodity in the world." While I have run from most of the more overt dangers of technology, I must confess that I have spent far too much time browsing through the latest subject of interest on YouTube, rather than delving deeply and thoughtfully into relationships, scriptures, and books.

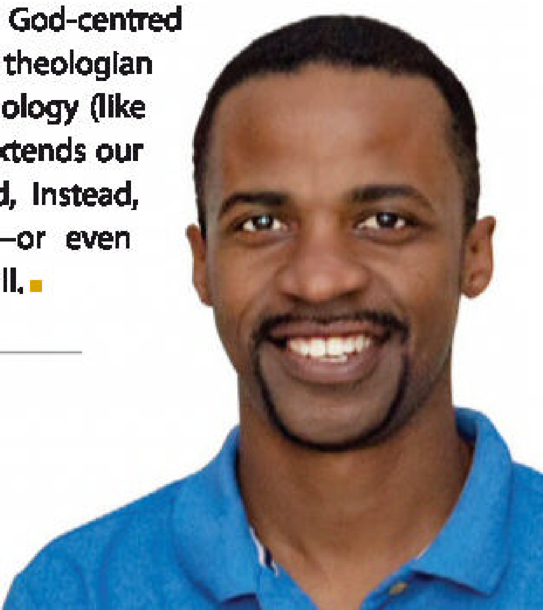
We should not seek to be relevant

Our greatest impact will not lie in being 'relevant' to a culture drunk and high on technology. Rather, it is in bringing Christ-likeness to a world starved of truth, substance, and meaningful relationships. Mark 1 records Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law, followed by scores of townsfolk wanting the same. The following day, Mark records the following in verse 35: *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."*

In doing so, Jesus avoided the crowds who were flocking to Him, preferring rather to be with His Father. Afterwards, rather than just 'hanging out' aimlessly, as we so often do on social media, our Lord said: *"Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."*

Take a break from social media

May we too have the courage and discipline to escape from the superficiality of technology and social media and instead find God and our purpose. Take a weekly social media and technology Sabbath as a family, and make the most of this holiday season by turning off technology for days on end. Though it may feel difficult at first, if we spend that time in God-centred pursuits, we will be far richer for it. As theologian John Stackhouse pointed out: "Technology (like magic) always simply amplifies and extends our wishes. The all-wise and loving God, Instead, gives us better than we can ask—or even imagine." A blessed Christmas to you all. ■



TENDAI CHITSIKE *is the pastor of Every Nation Church in Makhanda. Email: engrahamstown@gmail.com*

Desperate Communities Need Jesus

"We will never know how many desperate people are out there if you and I don't step out and become desperate to find and save them."

—by Gordon Claasen

Last month I started sharing the story of a 22-year-old man from one of the gang-ridden communities near to my church. The young man's first setback was growing up without a father. In these communities, growing up without a father figure makes you a prime candidate for future recruitment or inauguration into gangsterism. In some places the so called "recruitment" can start as early as 6 years old. Some young boys have already committed a murder by the age of 9. With the absence of a father, it is easy for the gang leader to take this role and the position of power and importance in the lives of the newly initiated. He becomes the disciplinarian, the provider, and the protector – as a pseudo father. The gang, in essence, then becomes the alternative family, as an outflow of dysfunctional and broken families.

Living on the streets

Now, the first taste of this young man's experience into gangsterism was on the streets where he was evicted from his house. That night, the landlord had demanded that his mother should sleep with him in exchange for the accommodation fees. His mother refused, and so they ended up on the streets once again. Fortunately, after years, a family member offered them a place to stay, where they grew up and finally found a place they could call home.

> Communities are desperate to be saved, and there is a God who is desperate to save them.

A life of gangsterism and crime

This young man grew up as a normal boy in the community – going to school, having friends, and playing soccer at a local club. A devastating incident happened one night, which robbed him and his friends from their teenage years. That night set them up for a life of gangsterism and lives as criminals. As they were on their way to celebrate a friend's birthday, they were stopped and robbed by a notorious gang in the area. A fight broke out between his friend and the gang leader and, in defending himself, his friend pushed the knife straight into the heart of the gang leader. From that night onwards, they were not just running from that gang, but from family, the community, and the schools which they were still attending, as they were constantly to be terrorised by the gang.

After many months of running away from the police and gangs, they decided to join a rival group for the sake of survival. This is how the gang became their new home, and the leader, their new father and protector.

These communities need Jesus

In their heart of hearts, every gang member knows this is not the life they should be living, or the life they had laid out for themselves, but desperation is sometimes a stronger temptation than the right and real situation, especially when nobody else represents what is right or a better alternative. The truth is that there is no agency that can present that alternative, other than the Church. These kind of communities are desperate to be saved, having a God that is desperate to save them. The third party to their desperate situation is the Church, which at times is not similarly desperate enough to fulfil that God-given mandate.

The Church needs to step up!

This young man is one of the fortunate ones to have had an encounter with God through a church service that we hosted in the open-air of his community. Although there is much more to say about this young man, it's refreshing to share that he got married and now has a stable family life. He became a pastor and a community leader over time. He is now also the author of two books, running his own television and radio programme.

We will never know how many desperate people are out there if you and I don't step out and become desperate to find and save them. ■

GORDON CLAASEN *is the senior pastor and founder of Kingdom Reign Ministries. He hosts events to equip leaders with the Word. Contact him by email office@kingdomreign.co.za*

CBN
SOUTH AFRICA

The Voice That Quietens DEPRESSION

"Depression is a terrible thing. It tells you that you are useless. That you are worthless. That nobody can love you. That your husband will leave you. That your children will try and move away from you."

—by CBN South Africa

Useless. Worthless. Unlovable. These are the words that Anita believed described her existence for far too long. Depression was something she spent years trying to understand, trying to escape from. The darkness that comes with depression seeped its fingers into every aspect of her life. Joy was always stolen from moments that should have been revelled in.

"It has been a very difficult journey and I would love to tell you that my faith in God has always carried me through, but over the years I have had many, many disagreements with God…"

A dreadful journey

It's hard to quieten the screaming voices of inadequacy that come with depression. But after hitting rock bottom and being admitted into a mental health clinic for suicide and depression, Anita finally reached a point where she was able to let the gentle voice of God penetrate through the darkness, bringing with it the light she so desperately needed for healing and restoration.

It's hard to quieten the screaming voices of inadequacy that come with depression.

"Even though I argue with God so much and so often, I love Him more than anything in the world. And I know that I wouldn't be the person that I am today if I hadn't been on this dreadful journey..."

The battle may not be over

Anita still wakes up each day with the shadows of depression encroaching the space around her. But she knows that the gentle voice of God is there to give her strength, to carry her, to light her path when she can't see the way ahead. She is the compassionate mother, wife, friend and inspiration that she is today despite, and partly because of, her illness. It has not defined her value or worth, but it has shaped how she sees the world and her whole-hearted dependence on God.

Watch Anita's full story

To watch Anita's story and other beautiful testimonies like hers, just scan the QR code below and it will take you to our new *This is Me* series. *This is Me* features the simple stories of ordinary people who have found God in life-changing ways within their suffering, hardship, and day-to-day activities.

Take hands with us today

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A MILLENNIAL'S PERSPECTIVE:

LOVE YOURSELF

Do you love yourself, deeply and truly? You need to love yourself! This is not only something that is crucial in this dark and depressed world, but it is something that is explicitly stated in the Bible — it is a commandment!

The most important commandments in the Word

The most important commandment in the Word is to *"love the Lord your God with all your heart"*. We all know that one. The second commandment is to *"love your neighbour as you love yourself"*. We all know that one too. But something that often gets lost is the implied wording between these two commandments, to love your neighbour **as you love yourself**.

God made you just as you are

Many people in this world suffer with feelings of self-hatred, self-doubt, insecurity, and a lack of love for who they are. I want to remind you today; you are a beautiful creation made personally by the Lord Himself. He knitted you together, exactly as you are. He brought you into this world with a plan and a purpose, and He wants you to love yourself dearly, as He loves you dearly. He sent His very own Son to die for you — let that sink in. Apply it to your own life, not just as a generic feel-good scripture to exclaim to others.

Know your self-worth

You have a purpose. You have tremendous value. You are loved. You are worthy. But you need to apply this in your own life, you need to really come to grips with how loved you are. And you need to love yourself more. Be more kind to yourself, be more gentle, be more forgiving. This world is evil and will point out your failures and what you have done wrong, but know that your self-worth and identity is rooted in something so much more firm and secure — His Word, His truth, and His love for you.

You are amazing! You are loved!

In a world that tells you that you need to be more, remind yourself that you are enough. Let this sink in. Repeat after me: "I am loved. I am amazing. I am beautiful. I am God's perfect creation. I am valued. I am worthy. I am special. My life is meaningful. God has a plan for me."

And don't let this be a superficial column that you brush past and dismiss. Take these truths, make them your own, and LOVE YOURSELF. ■

GILLIAN FRASER *is the Production Manager of JOY! Magazine. Email gillian@joymag.co.za*

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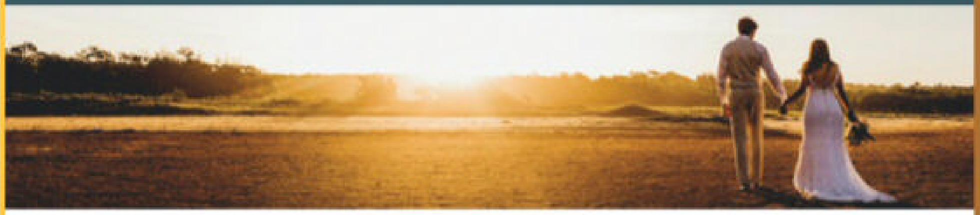
3 Points to Ponder on:

EFFORT IN MARRIAGE



My wife and I recently had the privilege to share some thoughts on marriage at a seminar. If there is one thing I have learnt in the last few years of being married, it is that we often neglect this important relationship in our lives under the banner of the 'busyness of life'. Preparing for this seminar I was reminded again of the importance of healthy marriages, and the necessity to put effort into your relationship.

Putting in effort

Genesis 2:24 says, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be **joined** to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* The Hebrew word for joined in this context is *Dabaq*, which mean to "cling, adhere, and pursue with affection". There is no way that you can pursue your spouse without **action** or **effort.**

Tend to your marriage with intention

The problem that many face is that we have become lazy and/or too busy to actively pursue our partners. It is ironic that we instinctively know that to make a plant grow or to grow a business we have to actively put in effort to ensure it survives and grows to be healthy. Yet in our marriages, we often put in little effort and expect the same result. The sad fact is that like a plant that has not been watered, our marriages will wither and die if we don't **intentionally** tend to them.

3 Points to Ponder:

1. Don't give up on your marriage. A well-known preacher said, "If your car runs out of fuel, do you sell it? No, you fill the tank." Fill the love tank of your marriage with your partner's love language.

2. You once did everything in your power to pursue and woo your partner. You opened doors, made their favourite food, and put in effort with your appearance to impress them. Let's not grow tired of pursuing them in these ways.

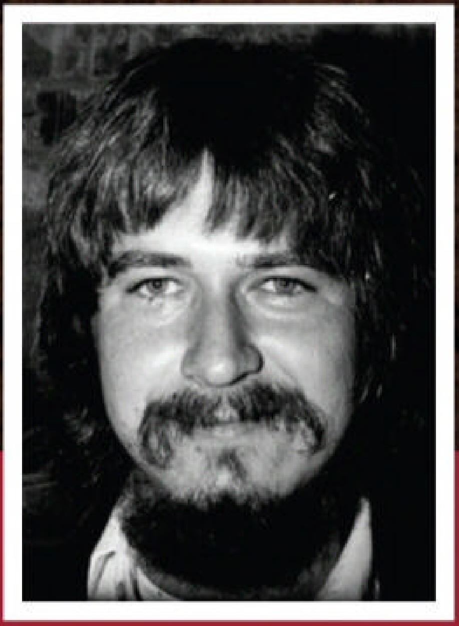
3. Look in their eyes and start a sentence with, "I love you because…". Try to do this at least once a week. After you have declared why you love them, end off with a short prayer. You know the saying, "Couples who pray together, stay together".

Let's rekindle our marriages by actively pursuing our spouses! ■

GAWIE DE LANGE *is the General Manager of JOY! Magazine. Email gawie@joymag.co.za*

TRAPPED Under a Tractor!

Joos Engelbrecht's Second Chance



My name is Joos Engelbrecht. I am 67 years old and live near Hartbeespoort in North West Province. This is the miraculous story of my second chance.

Young and rebellious

It was 1971. As a 17-year-old, I was a total rebel. I deemed none of the advice offered by my parents as important – I knew everything! I could make and break as I please – or so I thought. The realisation never dawned on me that I was really just a miserable sinner!

Within seconds, things went horribly wrong

My family lived on a smallholding. On the day in question, my father had asked me to plough a small field that he had already ploughed previously. The farmhand and I only had another 20 metres to cover, when I looked back and saw the plough's chain suddenly tightening. The tractor, a 1 tonne Massey Ferguson, climbed into the air, toppled over backwards, and fell on top of me.

> The doctor exclaimed, "Look, there is not a single broken bone in his body!"

Pinned down under a tractor

There I lay, pinned down under a pile of metal. I could not move. I felt water, or was it blood, running out of my ears and mouth. To this day, I do not know what it was. I was fully conscious, but felt no pain! My father feverishly tried to dig me out from underneath the machine with his bare hands. I heard him pray: "Almighty Jesus Christ, I am on my knees before You. I beg You, Lord; You can take his life, but please save my beloved son's soul!" I will never forget my father's prayer.

A giant hand

And then? A miracle happened! Still fully conscious, I saw a bright light shining onto the scene of the accident. A giant hand appeared above me and reached out to me. Golden rays streamed from the hand all over me and covered the whole accident scene. A beautiful voice began to speak to me and I realised that I was hearing the voice of God. He said: "I love you. Because I love you so much, I want to give you a second chance. It all depends on your choice. If you accept Me as your God and your Saviour, you will be saved. You know that I am keeping My hand over you, if I remove My hand you will die and be lost forever."

I answered the Lord in my thoughts, because I could not physically speak. "Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for giving me a second chance. From today onwards you are my God and Saviour. I surrender my life to You and I choose to follow You, Jesus, all my life."

In the Name of Jesus

Still wide awake, I lay pinned under the tractor, but Jesus' hand was covering me. My uncle Willie, a builder, was on a site near to our home. At this moment, a strange sensation had come over him. He had unction to take his whole team and to rush over to our house

Foto slegs ter illustrasie

As long as Jesus held His hand over me, He kept my broken body alive. I received a second chance!

immediately. He did so and found me helplessly pinned under the machine. His workers tried to lift the tractor right away, but despite their straining efforts, it did not budge. My uncle then proclaimed: "I will count to three and then we will pick up the tractor in the Name of Jesus Christ." At the count of three they lifted the Massey Ferguson like a feather and carried it away; I crawled out towards my uncle.

Specialists on stand-by

In the mean time, my dad had rushed home. My mother immediately called the emergency services and the hospital, while my father brought his old Chevrolet in a desperate attempt to push the tractor off me. However, upon his return, he found me standing next to my uncle and could not believe his eyes. He rushed me to the hospital where medical staff were already waiting for my arrival. They hurriedly took X-rays and then took me to the theatre where a team of specialists were ready to start the emergency operation.

The specialist studied the X-rays. Then he turned to the nurse and scolded her: "How could you bring someone else's X-rays to me at such a critical time! Take new X-rays and bring them back immediately." A second set of X-rays were quickly taken.

For the past 50 years, I have been proof that there is a living, loving God.

It is a miracle!

After studying the new X-rays, the doctor asked the staff to take a closer look. He said, "You are all specialists in your respective fields. Today we are seeing a miracle. Medically, this is impossible. I tell you; today we see with our own eyes that there is a living God! This young man will not be staying in the hospital tonight, because there is nothing wrong with him. Look! There is not a single broken bone in his body. The X-rays are those of a healthy person. We know that almost all tractor accidents are fatal – organs are damaged and bones crushed. Let us praise and glorify the Lord together! Today we see there is a living God!"

Walked out of the hospital

I walked out of that hospital unassisted. For the past 50 years, I have been living proof that there is a living, loving God. My earthly father's prayer saved my soul: Joos, the rebel, made way for a new, humble Joos. As long as Jesus held His hand over me, He kept my broken body alive. I received a second chance! His grace saved me from eternal hell and I praise and glorify Jesus' almighty Name.

Without Him we are lost forever. That is why we must accept Jesus as our Saviour and Redeemer. We must surrender our lives to Jesus, stop sinning, and live for Him, then we will spend eternity with our loving Creator. ■

A Song of Praise for the Lord's Faithfulness to His People

"Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.
For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations."

Psalm 100: 1-5

The Greatest Christmas Gift!

Glory to God in the Highest

Christmas Gift from ICU to a General Ward

—by Sophia Roman

Jesus was born in a smelly stable. He set aside His glory just so He could identify with mankind. The setting was most appalling, yet the angels lit up the sky, bursting with shouts of joy proclaiming "Glory" in awestruck wonder. *"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest' … The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen."* – Luke 2:13-14,20

Fear is not an emotion

So it was and has been for Pastor Neil Hart, who found himself in a setting where he was as good as dead. He vividly remembers the 50 days of being sick and 42 days of struggling to stay alive – deeply affected with Covid during the 2nd wave. His oxygen levels were between 41% – 62% for weeks on end. As he arrived at the hospital, he was immediately placed on an oxygen machine and sent straight to ICU. The specialists advised his Juanita, his wife, not to go home, but to stay as long as possible as there was no guarantee that he would be alive the next time she visits.

> *"I will not die; instead, I will live to tell what the Lord has done."* – Psalm 118:17

Faith over Fear

Pastor Neil and Juanita Hart

Navigating between fight and flight

Neil experienced fear on an extreme level, navigating his emotions between fight and flight. Fear is a spirit and the attack was fierce. This was indeed a tug of war, while hearing an evil voice: "I am aware that your spirit and soul belong to Christ, but I am here for your body."

Focus on the Great Physician

But then, it was as if Christ appeared to Neil for a brief moment. He recognised Him by the nail marks on His hands and feet. He heard, "Do not focus on your miracle, signs, or wonders. Focus on Me – the source of the Miracle, the Great Physician." Clearly he heard Psalm 118:17, *"I will not die; instead, I will live to tell what the Lord has done."* A group of eight doctors told Juanita that every patient that was hospitalised there at the same time with Covid had died. Not one had made it, yet her husband was the only one still struggling to breathe. He should have passed already. In the meantime, in the 2nd week of his hospitalisation, Juanita prepared and made flags in royal colours to give God the highest glory for the day of her husband's discharge from the hospital, by faith.

The Christmas gift

It was on Christmas day 2020 when a gift was presented to Pastor Hart by his Professor. "Today Mr Hart, I have a Christmas present for you. You are going to graduate from ICU to a General Ward." At this stage he could not walk and was still on the Oxygen machine. What kept him going was that he took communion by himself on a daily basis. A group of pastors held daily prayer meetings via Zoom and he logged in every day from his hospital bed. This kept his spirits high.

Sitting with Pastor Hart today and hearing the process he went through, surely God granted him glimpses of His glory. Today he still proclaims: Glory to God in the Highest! ■

SOPHIA ROMAN *is a pioneer, visionary and life transformation coach. Sophia and her husband Theo pastor the West Reach AOG Church in Mitchells Plain.*

Every Knee Shall Bow Before the King of Kings

—by Val Waldeck

The first Christmas, when *"God was manifested in the flesh"* (1 Tim 3:16), lowly shepherds and powerful leaders from the East (the Wise Men) bowed before the Lord Jesus Christ in humility and worship. They did not question the identity of the Babe of Bethlehem, but believed the Scriptures that prophesied His miraculous conception and entry into the world.

Many opposed Jesus during His time on earth

During His lifetime, many opposed, ridiculed, and criticised Him. Even His brothers rejected His claim to be divine (John 7:5). After His resurrection, they too bowed the knee and we find them in the Upper Room with Mary, His mother, and other disciples (Acts 1:14). Two of his brothers wrote parts of the New Testament. James became the leader of the Jerusalem Church and later wrote the Book of James where he refers to himself as *"James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"* – James 1:1. Another brother, Jude refers to himself in his book as *"Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James"* – Jude 1:1. They willingly bowed the knee in their lifetime.

> **We are commanded to bow the knee and worship God only.**

What does it mean to bow?

Bowing the knee has always been considered symbolic of bowing or kneeling before Almighty God in worship and humility, or showing submission to man and his ideas and philosophies. We are seeing a demonstration of the latter in our days with the Black Lives Matter campaign and the resistance by those who will only bow before God.

Is Jesus really divine?

Is Jesus God? His claims to be divine are very specific. He said, *"I and My Father are one"* – John 10:30. Jesus responded to Philip's request to see God with these words: *"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* – John 14:9. *"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God"* – 1 John 4:15. The Bible is clear. *"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."* – Colossians 1:16-17

Jesus is, was, and will always be

Jesus existed before the creation of time. The people listening to Him understood exactly what He meant when He said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was (existed), I AM"* – John 8:58. The book of Hebrews records the words of the Father: *"But to the Son he says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever"* – Hebrews 1:8. John wrote: *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* – John 1:1

Worship Christ alone

We are commanded to bow the knee and worship God only. John was overwhelmed when an angel shared the message of the Book of Revelation with him. *"And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* – Revelation 19:10

A quote from C.S. Lewis

C.S. Lewis put it this way. "A man who was merely a man and said the

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." – Philippians 2:9-11

sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

We may live without Christ, but we dare not die without Him.

Many have disputed Christ's teachings

Over the years, millions have rejected the undisputed claim of Jesus to be God. Richard Dawkins, British evolutionary biologist, ethologist, popular-science writer, and an avid atheist said, "Somebody as intelligent as Jesus would have been an atheist." Several writers, including Friedrich Nietzsche, have questioned Jesus' testimony by claiming He was insane for believing He was God and/or the Messiah. In their opinion, Jesus was a mere mortal, ultimately misguided, a very ordinary ignorant man, "neither learned nor a yogi".

Mark Twain wrote: "Jesus Christ … devised hell and proclaimed it! Which is to say, that as the meek and gentle Savior He was a thousand »

Every Knee Shall Bow Before the King of Kings

billion times crueller than ever He was in the Old Testament – oh, incomparably more atrocious than ever He was when He was at the very worst in those old days!" Arthur Drews, a writer, historian, and philosopher, took it one step further. In his opinion, Jesus did not exist at all but was simply a myth invented by a cult.

What do those in eternity think today?

None of these men expected to bow the knee before the King of kings and Lord of lords. Those who have passed into eternity make one wonder: What is their opinion of the Lord Jesus Christ now? We may live without Christ, but we dare not die without Him.

Every man shall bow his knee

The Bible boldly declares that ALL will bow their knee, willingly or unwillingly. Every person who has ever lived, angels, satan and his demonic hordes, and all creation will one day bow before Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as Lord. Every knee, every tongue. All will either bow to Jesus as Saviour or bow before Him as Judge (John 5:22). *"It is Written!"*

Santa Claus has replaced the wonder of Christ in the affection of many children.

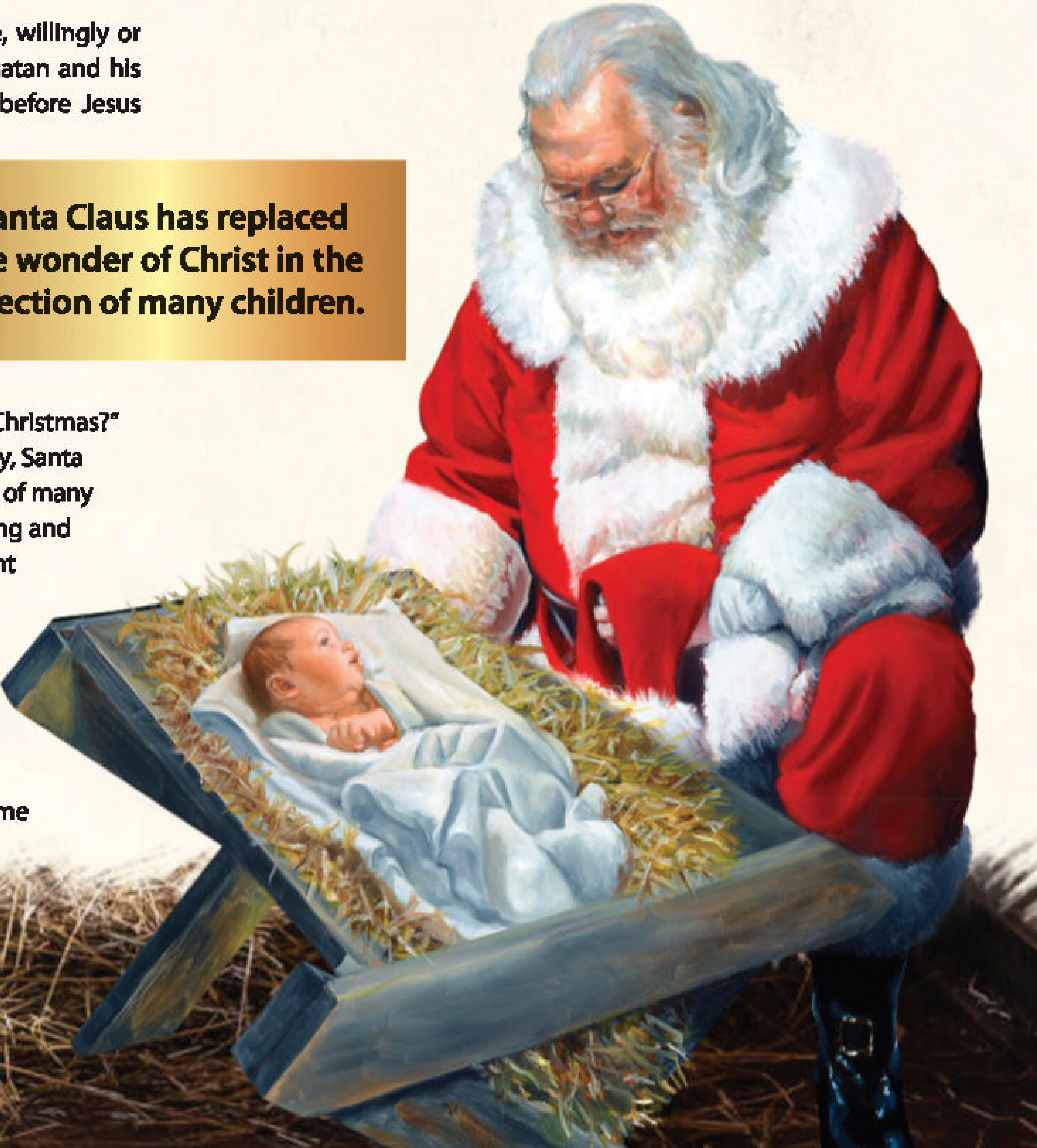
Santa deceives many young children

The Great Christmas Counterfeit is no exception. I once asked a little chap, "Who was born at Christmas?" With a big smile, he responded, "Father Christmas!" Sadly, Santa Claus has replaced the wonder of Christ in the affection of many children. This mythical figure claims to have no beginning and no end, the ultimate rewarder of goodness. Omnipresent (present everywhere), omniscient (knowing everything people do and think), and omnipotent (powerful enough to deliver the heartfelt desires of children everywhere), with red as his primary colour, he seeks to capture the hearts of children. As a young child, I believed in Father Christmas. When I discovered he was a fake at around the age of nine, I came to believe God was fake too because they seemed so alike. How grateful I am the Holy Spirit softened my atheist heart and I found Jesus to be Lord and God indeed. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

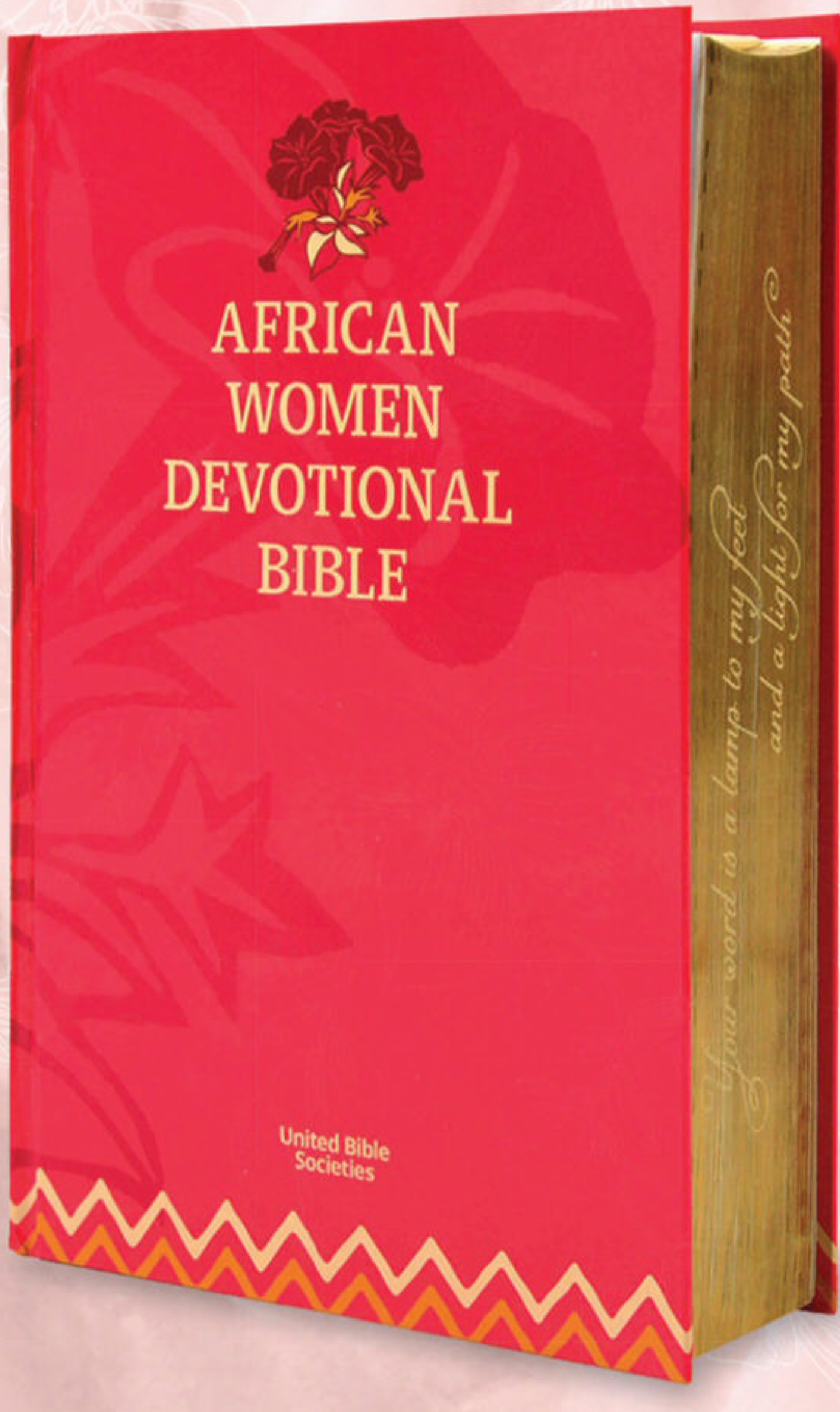
Have you bowed your knee?

When will all bow the knee to Jesus? Those who love Him, willingly bow now. Those who reject or ignore Him will bow at the Last Christmas when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to this earth in power and great Glory. **Which group will you be in?**

"Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen." – Revelation 1:7



A Christmas delight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Why do we celebrate Christmas?

Christians all over the world celebrate Christmas in honour of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Various Christmas traditions have been associated with the celebration of Christmas, and different cultures celebrate in different ways. The unifying factor is the historical fact that Jesus was born, c. 5 BC. The angel who appeared to the shepherds the night of Jesus' birth said, *"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."* – Luke 2:10-11

A celebration

We celebrate Christmas because, as the angel said, the birth of Jesus Christ is *"good news."* Good news is meant to be celebrated. In fact, the angel said the news of Jesus' birth would cause *"great joy"* and would be *"for all the people"*—the joyful celebration would be universal. People around the globe would be glad for this occasion.

We celebrate Christmas because the birth of Jesus Christ is *"good news."*

The Almighty took on human flesh

We celebrate Christmas because, as the angel said, *"A Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."* The three titles the angel applies to Jesus are important. Jesus is the Saviour who delivers us from sin and death (Matt 1:21). He is the human Messiah (or Christ) who fulfils the Law and the Prophets, showing that God is faithful (see Matt 5:17). And He is the divine Lord who has entered our world: the Almighty has taken on human flesh; God and man have been fused together in an indivisible, eternal bond; God is truly with us (see Matt 1:23).

> We celebrate Christmas because it was at Christmastime that the Rescuer of all mankind came to save us from the hopeless situation we were in. God did not stay in heaven; He came down to where we are.

We needed deliverance

In celebrating Christmas, we celebrate the Saviour, because we needed deliverance. We celebrate the Christ in whom all of God's promises are "Yes" and "Amen" (2 Cor 1:20). We celebrate the Lord who in humility took on *"the very nature of a servant"* for our sakes (see Phil 2:6-8).

Why do we take part in traditions?

We celebrate Christmas with gift-giving because of the "indescribable gift" that God gave to us (2 Cor 9:15). We celebrate Christmas by stringing lights because the Light of the world has come to us (John 1:4; Isa 9:2). We celebrate Christmas with carols and choirs because they are expressive of joy and follow the examples of Mary and Zacharias and Simeon and the angels, all of whom extolled the Lord in poetry (Luke 1-2). We celebrate Christmas by decorating evergreen trees with stars and angels and tinsel because of the eternal life Jesus brings (John 4:14)—and stars and angels and beauty were all associated with Jesus' birth.

> **Christmas is a privilege for the believer, not a pagan festival to avoid.**

Celebrating God's love

In celebrating Christmas, we celebrate the love and condescension of God. In Texas in 1987, a toddler by the name of Jessica McClure fell into an eight-inch well casing. Down she went, becoming stuck twenty-two feet below ground. Once people discovered that "Baby Jessica" was in the well, they took immediate action. They didn't tell her to find a way to climb back up, and they didn't just shout happy thoughts to encourage her. No, they went down to where she was and got her. They did whatever it took. Rescuers worked nonstop for fifty-eight hours to free her.

God came down to rescue us

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve fell. Down they went, dragging all humanity with them into the darkness and death of sin. And what did God do? He did not tell us to find our own way out of the mess we were in, and He did more than shout down happy thoughts to us from heaven. No, He came down to where we were and got us. That's what Christmas is all about—God's coming down to rescue us, to do whatever it took to deliver us from sure death.

God came to save us

When even one person is in a life-threatening situation, we understand what has to be done. When God looked down at our sinful planet, He saw a whole world of people in mortal danger. We celebrate Christmas because it was at Christmas time that the Rescuer of all mankind came to save us from the hopeless situation we were in. God did not stay in heaven; He came down to where we are. ■

What should parents tell their kids about Santa Claus?

Although Santa Claus is a mythical figure, his creation is based in part on a great Christian man named Saint Nicholas of Myra, who lived in the 4th century. Nicholas was born to Christian parents who left him an inheritance when they died, which he distributed to the poor. He became a priest at a young age and was well-known for his compassion and generosity. He had a reputation for giving gifts anonymously, and he would throw bags of money into people's homes (and sometimes down their chimneys) under the cover of night to avoid being spotted.

Santa's origin

Nicholas passed away on December 6 sometime around the 340s or 350s AD, and the day of his death became an annual feast in which children would put out food for Nicholas and straw for his donkey. It was said that the saint would come down from heaven during the night and replace the offerings with toys and treats—but only for the good boys and girls. There are many different versions of the legend of Saint Nicholas, but all are the inspiration for the jolly, red-suited gift-giver that we now know as Santa Claus.

Christian parents are torn

Many Christian parents are torn as to whether or not they should play the "Santa game" with their children. On one hand, he makes Christmas fun and magical, leaving wonderful holiday memories for years to come. On the other hand, the focus of Christmas should be on Jesus Christ and how much He has already given us. So, is the story of Santa Claus an innocent addition to Christmas festivities, or is he a subject that should be avoided?

Although Santa is mythical, his creation is based in part on a great Christian man.

Santa can set bad precedents

Parents need to use their own judgement in deciding whether or not to include Santa during the holidays, but here are some things to consider: Children who believe that the gifts they receive Christmas morning are from a magical man with unending resources are less likely to appreciate what they have been given, and the sacrifices their parents make in providing them. Greed and materialism can overshadow the holiday season, which is meant to be about giving, loving, and worshiping God. Children whose parents are on a tight budget may feel that they have been overlooked by Santa, or even worse, deemed one of the "bad" boys or girls.

Santa is a lie

An even more troubling aspect of telling our children that Santa comes down the chimney each year to leave their gifts is that it is, obviously, a lie. We live in a society that believes that lying for the "right" reason is acceptable. As long as it doesn't hurt anyone, it is not a problem. This is contrary to what the Bible tells us. *"For the Scriptures say, 'If you want to live a happy life and good days, keep your tongue from speaking evil, and keep your lips from telling lies'"* – 1 Peter 3:10, NLT. Of course, telling our children that Santa is real is not a malicious deception, but it is, nevertheless, a lie.

Children trust their parents

Although it is probably not typical, some children honestly feel deceived and betrayed by their parents when they find out that Santa is not real. Children trust their parents to tell them the truth, and it is our responsibility not to break this trust. If we do, they will not believe more important things we tell them, such as the truth about Christ, whom they also cannot physically see.

Always lead your kids to Christ

This doesn't mean we must leave Santa completely out of Christmas. Children can still play the "Santa game" even if they know it is all pretend. They can make lists, sit on his lap at the mall, and leave out cookies and milk on Christmas Eve. This will not rob them of their joy of the season, and gives parents the opportunity to tell their children about the godly qualities of the real Saint Nicholas, who dedicated his life to serving others and made himself into a living example of Jesus Christ. ■

Break my Chains this Christmas...

You can't see them, but I'm bound by chains. Chains of disease and superstition. Chains that are stealing my hands, eyes, feet, family, and friends.

I HAVE LEPROSY...

Leprosy germs are invading my skin and nerves. When my nerves die, I won't feel pain when touching a hot stove. I'll be robbed of fingers, toes, and sight. My family may disown me. If people offer me work, they'll abuse me...

BUT THERE'S GOOD NEWS!

Leprosy is curable. The Leprosy Mission gives me tablets that will save my hands. I'm learning to avoid disabilities. My family is conquering their fears. I'm learning to work for myself, meaning I won't depend on other people for an income.

The Leprosy Mission is breaking my chains, and they need your help. The Leprosy Mission is a Christian charity, funded by people like you, who love the Lord, fulfilling His words, recorded in Matthew 25:40, *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."*

This Christmas, please help The Leprosy Mission to help me. My treatment costs R1000 per month. R500 buys a pair of shoes for someone with numb feet. A gift of R200 presents the Gospel. A training course costs R5000.

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CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE

Women in the Lineage of Jesus

—by Dr Victor Kuligin

This month as we celebrate Christmas, we take a look at some important women mentioned in the lineage of Jesus. While women played an important role in Jesus' ministry, they also feature prominently in His genealogy. This is strange since Jewish genealogies normally track descent through men in the line. This is, for example, what Luke 3:23-38 does for Jesus' genealogy.

However, Matthew 1:1-17 includes five women, something not typically done. Looking at the women Matthew names provides a few surprises, because some of them are not who we might expect in the lineage of the Saviour of humanity.

> **Jesus' genealogy includes adulterers, prostitutes, and 'unclean' Gentiles.**

Matthew's record

Unlike Luke, who begins his genealogy with Jesus' earthly father Joseph and works backward, Matthew goes back to the father of the Jewish people, Abraham, and works forward. He presents the genealogy in three groups of fourteen generations (1:17), a Jewish stylistic presentation that may in fact skip some people. What is most unique, though, is that Matthew mentions five women.

Questionable character

The first is Tamar (Matt 1:3). Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah (the tribe from which Jesus came). She dressed as a prostitute and seduced her father-in-law, Judah, falling pregnant with twins (Gen 38). The one son, Perez, is in Jesus' lineage.

Matthew next mentions Rahab (Matt 1:5), the prostitute who hid the Jewish spies in Jericho (Josh 2). She was commended for her faith

Hebrew genealogies

A genealogy is a record of a person's ancestry. Unfortunately for many people today, they don't know much about their forebears, but for the Jews, genealogies are of prime importance. Some Jews today, for example, can trace their religious lineage for millennia all the way back to the Old Testament line of Levites and priests. Hebrew genealogies have been used for determining inheritance rights, a person's legacy, and royal pedigree. The latter is precisely how Matthew uses Jesus' genealogy, to establish Him as the long-awaited King from the family of David. It is Jesus who fulfils God's promise to David: *"Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever."* – 2 Samuel 7:16

and was saved when God destroyed the city (Heb 11:31). Rahab eventually gave birth to Boaz.

Already we have two prostitutes mentioned and we are only four verses into Jesus' genealogy. It appears that Matthew has gone out of his way to name these women, something he didn't have to do. Perhaps he revelled in the fact that God was able to take such flawed people and use them in such a mighty way.

David's family

In the same verse 5, Matthew includes Ruth, a Moabite woman who married Boaz (Ruth 4:13). Boaz and Ruth bore Obed, the grandfather of King David. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot who had been raped by one of his daughters (Gen 19:37).

David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11), the next woman listed in Jesus' lineage (Matt 1:6), resulted in their son, Solomon, who eventually became king of Israel.

Jesus' mother

To this point Matthew's selection of women continues to highlight those who are rather notorious—either morally or ethnically compromised. However, with the fifth woman, Matthew ends his genealogy with a female of supreme virtue.

In another surprising move, Matthew not only names Jesus' earthly father but he also names His mother. Matthew (1:16) mentions Mary, the mother of Jesus, a faithful woman who was favoured by God (Luke 1:30) and chosen to bear the Saviour of the world.

What can we learn from these women?

Jesus' Jewish genealogy includes adulterers, prostitutes, and 'unclean' Gentiles. Often those with royal pedigree worked hard to hide the shameful people in their lineage, but Matthew openly names people who many might consider less than reputable. This is in line with what Jesus did during His earthly ministry, becoming the friend of sinners (Luke 15:1-2). He associated with the lowly and downtrodden. As such, we should never consider others outside the reach of God's mercy. God can use anyone for His eternal purposes.

God is not limited to only using 'holy' or 'righteous' individuals. In fact, if God is intent on using people, the only ones available are flawed human beings who, because of their sin, fall short of God's holy standards. And yet, God uses these people—*uses us*—anyway.

We should never consider others outside the reach of God's mercy.

Patriarchal memory

It is unfortunate that much of human history concentrates on the exploits of successful men and often forgets the women who raised them. In the Christian era, countless men of God had godly mothers to thank for their Christian upbringing, especially in times and places where fathers were emotionally distant or who travelled for work and were gone for long stretches of time.

Yet, despite our history books passing over such godly women, God doesn't. He will never forget the hard work, gentle care, and fervent prayers of the women who silently served Him and His kingdom. And we in Christian communities should do the same, honouring the women who went before us and who were instrumental in our faith and Christian rearing.

God of mercy

Nobody was raised by perfect parents. All of us fail our children in some way. Jesus' genealogy is a reminder that despite these universal shortcomings, God can still use us for eternally significant purposes.

Let this be a reminder that in your own imperfections, God can mercifully lift you up. Trust that He can turn your failures into blessings. *"Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*– 2 Corinthians 12:9 ■

14 Biblical Facts About Angels

—compiled by Gillian Fraser

For centuries, artists have portrayed angels as beautiful humans with wings and glowing light, complete with halos, harps, and flowing white gowns (or perfectly sculpted bodies). But is that really what angels look like? Angels have inspired all sorts of imaginative stories and depictions, but what's left when we separate fact from fiction? In order to know the truth, we have to ask, what does the Bible say about angels?

These facts will help us learn a lot about the angels in the Bible: what they are, why God created them, how their hierarchy works, and much more.

1. GOD CREATED ANGELS

Angels haven't always existed. According to scripture, they're part of the universe God created. In a passage that refers to angels (the *"host"* or *"armies"* of heaven), we read, *"You are the Lord, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host ... and the host of heaven worships you"* – Nehemiah 9:6. In the New Testament, Paul tells us that God created all things *"visible and invisible,"* and specifically includes the angelic world with the phrase *"whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities."* – Colossians 1:16

While these Bible verses tell us that God created angels, the Bible also suggests that they don't "exist" in the same way we do. The author of Hebrews suggests that all angels are *"spirits"* (Heb 1:13-14). When Jesus appears to the disciples, He asserts that "spirits" don't have bodies like He does (Luke 24:39). In the Bible, angels can't usually be seen by humans unless God reveals them (Num 22:31, 2 Kings 6:17, Luke 2:13). However, from time to time angels took on a bodily form and appeared to various people in scripture (Matt 28:5; Heb 13:2).

2. THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF ANGELS IN THE BIBLE

Scripture names three categories of heavenly beings that appear to be types of angels: cherubim, seraphim, and *"living creatures."*

CHERUBIM:

Cherubim are mentioned in several places throughout Scripture:

- They guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:24).
- God is enthroned above them (Eze 10:1-22).
- God rides on them (Psa 18:10)
- Two golden figures of cherubim sit above the Ark of the Covenant, where God promised to dwell among His people (Exo 25:22, see also verses 18-21).

SERAPHIM:

Another type of angel, the seraphim, are only mentioned once in the Bible. They appear in Isaiah 6:2-7, where they continually worship the Lord and say, *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."* – Isaiah 6:3

LIVING CREATURES:

Ezekiel and Revelation speak of other kinds of heavenly beings known as *"living creatures"* around God's throne (Eze 1:5-14, Rev 4:6-8). They appeared like a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle, representing various parts of God's creation (wild beasts, domesticated animals, human beings, and birds). They, too, worship God continually: *"Day and night they never cease to sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'"* – Revelation 4:8

3. ANGELS HAVE A HIERARCHY

Angels in the Bible appear to have a rank and order. The angel hierarchy is supported by Jude 9, when the angel Michael is called an *"archangel"*—a title that indicates rule or authority over other angels. He's also called *"one of the chief princes"* in Daniel 10:13, and appears to lead God's angelic army in Revelation 12: *"Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated"* – Revelation 12:7-8. Paul also tells us that the Lord will return from heaven *"with the archangel's call"* – 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Scripture doesn't tell us if this refers to Michael, or if there are other archangels as well.

4. ANGELS ARE NOT OMNIPRESENT

Angels frequently appear as messengers in the Bible, travelling from one place to another (see Luke 1:26-27, where Gabriel *"was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth"*). The fact that angels are not omnipresent is made explicit when an angel comes to Daniel and says:

"I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, so I left him there with the prince of the kingdom of Persia and came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days." – Daniel 10:12-14

If angels were omnipresent, Michael wouldn't have "came to help" because he would've already been there, and this angel wouldn't need to leave Michael to bring this message. **Unlike God, who is omnipresent, angels are finite creatures, limited to one place at one time.**

5. WE DON'T KNOW HOW MANY ANGELS EXIST

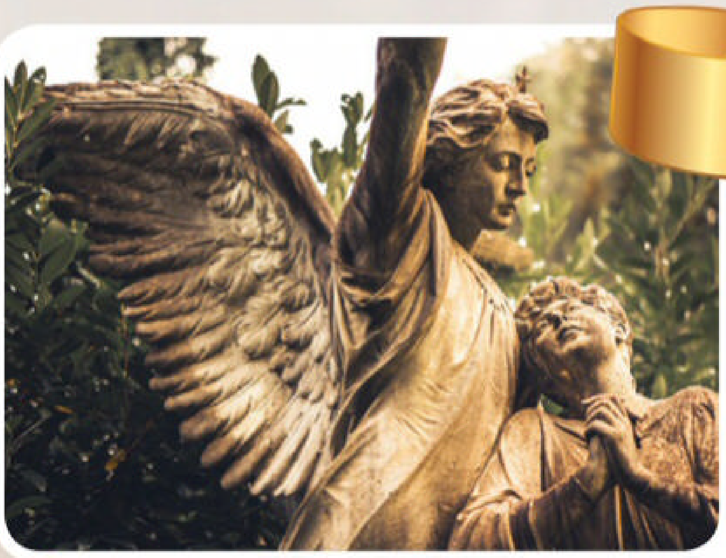
The Bible doesn't tell us how many angels God created. But apparently, there are a lot of them. Here are a few of the ways the Bible tells us how many angels there are:

- On Mount Sinai, God *"came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand."* – Deuteronomy 33:2
- We also learn that, *"the chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands."* – Psalm 68:17
- When we come to worship, we come into the presence of *"innumerable angels."* – Hebrews 12:22
- John says, *"I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands."* – Revelation 5:11

Every biblical reference to the total number of angels suggests that they're beyond counting.

6. ONLY TWO ANGELS HAVE NAMES IN THE BIBLE

Only two angels are specifically named in scripture. As we said above, the archangel Michael is mentioned in Jude 9, Revelation 12:7-8, and Daniel 10:13 and 21. Gabriel is the only other angel named in the Bible. He's mentioned in Daniel 8:16 and 9:21 as a messenger who comes from God to speak to Daniel. He's also identified as God's messenger in Luke 1. He tells Zechariah, *"I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God"* – Luke 1:19. Then we read, *"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin ... and the virgin's name was Mary."* – Luke 1:26-27



7. WE CAN'T PROVE THAT GUARDIAN ANGELS EXIST

The Bible clearly tells us that God sends angels to protect people: *"He will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone."* – Psalm 91:11-12

But are these what we think of as "guardian angels"? Jesus' words in Matthew 18:10 seem to support the idea that individual people (or at least children) have guardian angels, *"in heaven **their angels** always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven."* But Jesus may only mean that angels are assigned to protect little children in general. When the disciples in Acts 12:15 say that Peter's "angel" must be knocking at the door, this doesn't necessarily imply that they believe in individual guardian angels. It's possible that they believed an angel was simply guarding Peter at that time.

While arguments can be made, there seems to be no definitive biblical proof for the existence of "guardian angels."

8. ANGELS DO NOT MARRY

Jesus taught that in the resurrection people *"neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven"* – Matthew 22:30 (see also Luke 20:34-36). This clearly suggests that angels don't marry. No other passages address relationships between angels, so anything beyond this is simply speculation.

9. ANGELS ARE VERY POWERFUL

Angels are called *"mighty ones who do his word"* (Psa 103:20), *"powers"* (Eph 1:21), and *"dominions"* and *"authorities"* (Col 1:16). They are certainly *"greater in might and power"* than humans (2 Pet 2:11, see also Matt 28:2). Angels use their power to battle against satan's demonic forces (Dan 10:13, Rev 12:7-8, 20:1-3). During our earthly lives, we're *"lower than the angels"* – Hebrews 2:7. **But as powerful as angels are, when Jesus returns, followers of Christ will be raised higher than them (1 Cor 6:3).**

10. WE DON'T KNOW WHEN ANGELS WERE CREATED

Genesis 2:1 tells us that the angels were made at some point before the seventh day of creation: *"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them"* ("host" here refers to the heavenly beings). Exodus 20:11 is even more explicit: *"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day."* We can at least confirm that all the angels were created by the sixth day of creation.

But can we be any more specific? There may be a hint at the creation of angelic beings on the first day of creation, when we read that *"in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Gen 1:1), immediately followed by, *"the earth was without form and void"* (Gen 1:2). There's no mention of the heavens in this second verse. This may be intended to contrast the emptiness of the earth is with the heavens, where God already created angelic beings. This idea could be supported by Job, where we read that *"the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"* when God laid the *"cornerstone"* of the earth and sunk its *"bases"* (Job 38:6-7). If the angels (*"the sons of God"*) shouted for joy when God was forming the earth, **this could imply that God created the angelic beings early on the first day. However, this is only speculation.**

11. ANGELS ARE EXAMPLES

Angels show us what perfect obedience looks like. Jesus teaches us to pray, *"Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt 6:10), and in heaven God's will is done by angels, immediately, joyfully, and without question. Their delight is to be God's humble servants, faithfully performing their assigned tasks, great or small. Our desire and prayer should be that we will do the same. Angels also model worship. John sees around God's throne a great angelic army, *"numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain…'"* –Revelation 5:11-12. **If the angels find it their highest joy to praise God continuously, shouldn't we, too?**

12. ANGELS CARRY OUT SOME OF GOD'S PLANS

There are numerous ways in which angels carry out God's plans on earth:

- They frequently bring God's messages to people (Luke 1:11-19, Acts 8:26).
- They carry out some of God's judgements, bringing a plague upon Israel (2 Sam 24:16-17), smiting the leaders of the Assyrian army (2 Chron 32:21), striking King Herod dead because he did not give God glory (Acts 12:23), or pouring out bowls of God's wrath on the earth (Rev 16:1).
- When Christ returns, angels will come with him as a great army accompanying their King and Lord (Matt 16:27, Luke 9:26, 2 Thes 1:7).
- They patrol the earth as God's representatives (Zech1:10-11).
- They carry out war against demonic forces (Dan 10:13; Rev 12:7-8).
- John records that an angel *"seized the dragon who is the devil and satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit..."* – Revelation 20:1-3
- When Christ returns, an archangel will proclaim His coming (1 Thes 4:16 and other passages).

13. ANGELS GLORIFY GOD

Humans aren't the only intelligent, moral creatures who glorify God. The Psalmist declares: *"Angels glorify God for who he is in himself, for his excellence. Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word!"* – Psalm 103:20. The seraphim continually praise God for His holiness (Isa 6:2-3), and so do the four living creatures (Rev 4:8). Angels also glorify God as they witness His plan unfold. When Christ was born in Bethlehem, a multitude of angels praised God and said, *"Glory to God in the highest"* – Luke 2:14. Jesus tells us, *"There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* (Luke 15:10), indicating that angels rejoice when someone turns from sin and trusts in Christ. Peter tells us that *"angels long to look"* (1 Pet 1:12) into the glories of the plan of salvation as it works out in the lives of believers each day. To emphasise the seriousness of particular commands, Paul reminds us that our actions are carried out in the presence of angelic witnesses (1 Tim 5:21, see also 1 Cor 4:9). If Timothy follows Paul's instructions, angels will witness his obedience and glorify God. If he neglects to obey, angels will also see and be grieved.

14. ANGELS ARE NOT TO BE WORSHIPPED

"Worship of angels" was one of the false doctrines being taught at Colossae (Col 2:18). In the book of Revelation, an angel warns John not to worship him: *"You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God."* – Revelation 19:10

We shouldn't pray to angels, either. God is able to answer prayer. Paul warns us against thinking that any other "mediator" can come between us and God (1 Tim 2:5). If we were to pray to angels, it would implicitly give them a status equal to God. There are no examples in scripture of anyone praying to an angel or asking angels for help. Moreover, scripture gives us no warrant to seek appearances of angels. They manifest themselves unsought. To seek such appearances would seem to indicate an unhealthy curiosity or a desire for some kind of spectacular event rather than a love for God and devotion to Him and His work. Though angels did appear to people at various times in scripture, the people apparently never sought those appearances. Our role is rather to talk to the Lord, who is Himself the commander of all angelic forces. However, it would not seem wrong to ask God to fulfil His promise in Psalm 91:11 to send angels to protect us in times of need. ■

What does the Bible say about DEMONS?

Demons are fallen angels, as Revelation 12:9 indicates: *"The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."* Satan's fall from heaven is symbolically described in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-15. When he fell, satan took some of the angels with him—one third of them, according to Revelation 12:4. Jude 6 also mentions angels who sinned. So, biblically, demons are fallen angels who, along with satan, chose to rebel against God.

There are demons waging war

Some of the demons are already locked *"in darkness, bound with everlasting chains"* (Jude 1:6) for their sin. Others are free to roam and are referred to as *"the powers of this dark world and ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* in Ephesians 6:12 (Col 2:15). The demons still follow satan as their leader and do battle with the holy angels in an attempt to thwart God's plan and hinder God's people (Dan 10:13).

> Demons are fallen angels who, along with satan, chose to rebel against God.

Demonic possession still occurs

Demons, as spirit beings, have the ability to take possession of a physical body. Demonic possession occurs when a person's body is completely controlled by a demon. This cannot happen to a child of God, since the Holy Spirit resides in the heart of the believer in Christ (1 John 4:4).

An end of torment

Jesus, during His earthly ministry, encountered many demons. Of course, none of them were a match for the power of Christ: *"Many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word"* – Matthew 8:16. Jesus' authority over the demons was one of the proofs that He was indeed the Son of God (Luke 11:20). The demons who encountered Jesus knew who He was, and they feared Him: *"'What do you want with us, Son of God?' [the demons] shouted. 'Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?'"* – Matthew 8:29. The demons know their end will be one of torment.

Demons set out to deceive and destroy

Satan and his demons now look to destroy the work of God and deceive anyone they can (1 Pet 5:8; 2 Cor 11:14-15). The demons are described as evil spirits (Mat 10:1), unclean spirits (Mark 1:27), lying spirits (1 Kings 22:23), and angels of satan (Rev 12:9). Satan and his demons deceive the world (2 Cor 4:4), promulgate false doctrine (1 Tim 4:1), attack Christians (2 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 5:8), and combat the holy angels (Rev 12:4-9).

Defeated enemies

The demons/fallen angels are enemies of God, but they are defeated enemies. Christ has *"disarmed the powers and authorities,"* and He has *"made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"* – Colossians 2:15. As we submit to God and resist the devil, we have nothing to fear. *"The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."* – 1 John 4:4 ■

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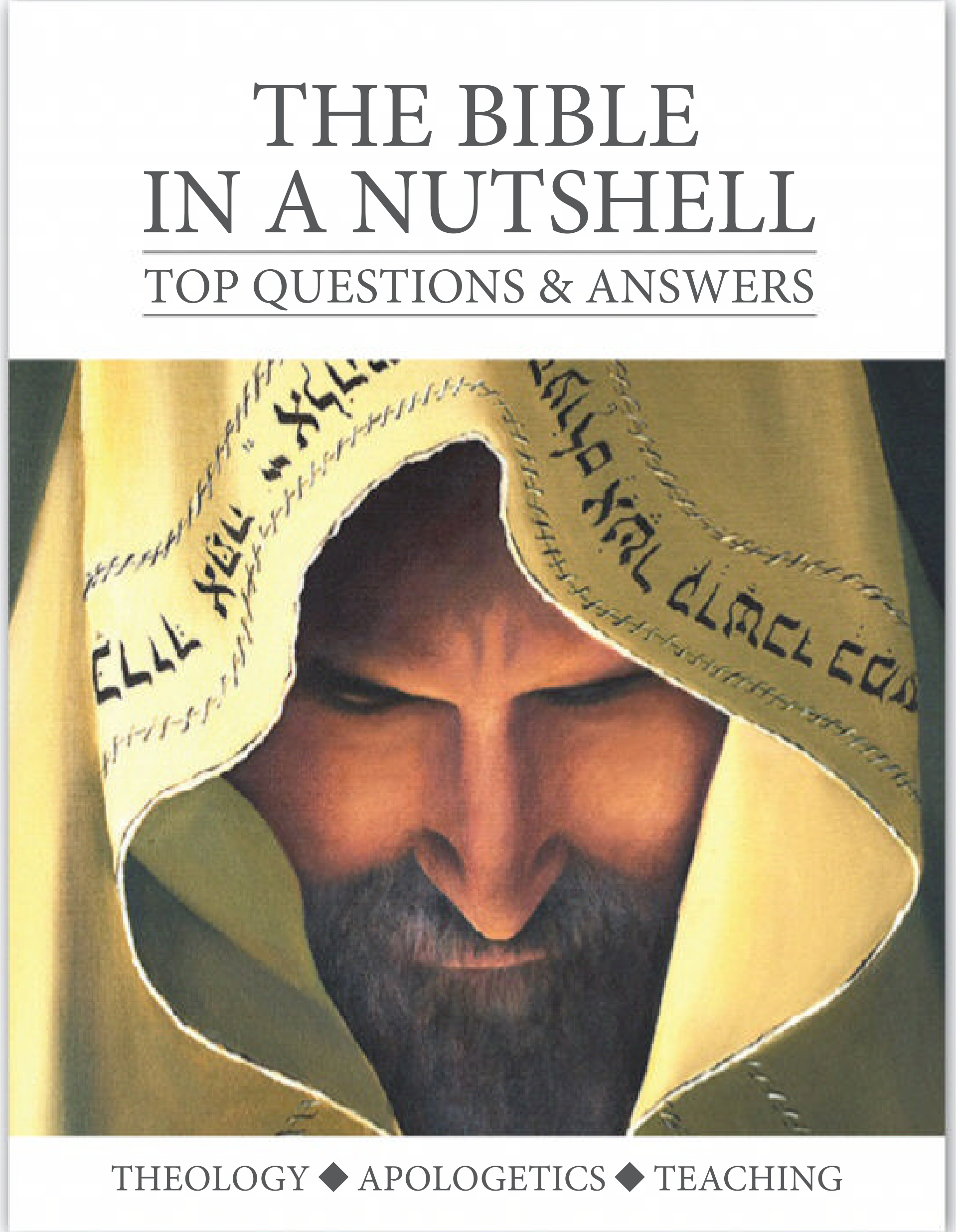
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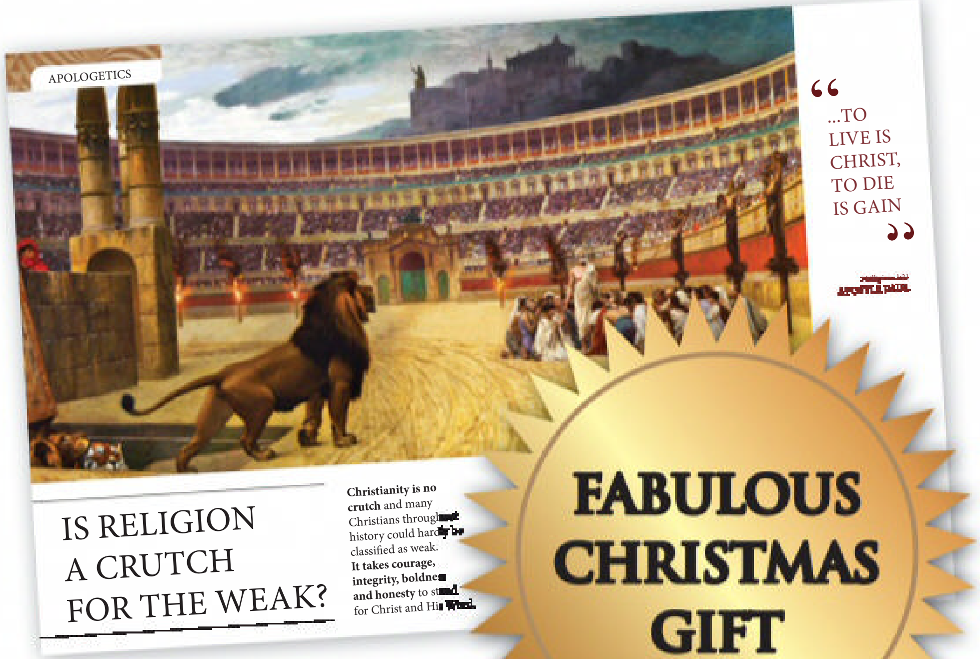
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IS RELIGION A CRUTCH FOR THE WEAK?

Christianity is no crutch and many Christians throughout history could hardly be classified as weak. **It takes courage, integrity, boldness and honesty** to stand for Christ and His Word.

“...TO LIVE IS CHRIST, TO DIE IS GAIN”

APOSTLE PAUL

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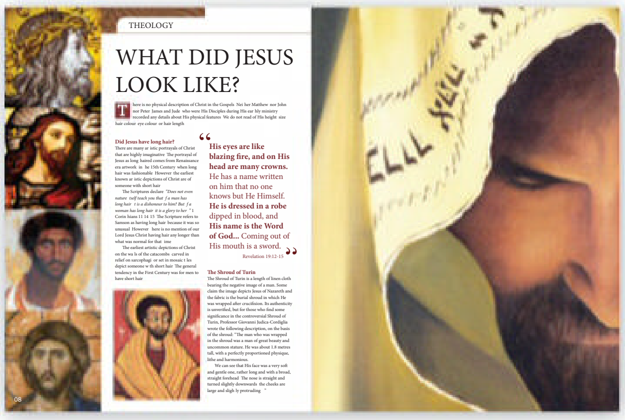
This book is the first in a series of curated articles on essential **foundational Christian topics. We explore theology, apologetics and teaching.** Summarised, explained, and beautifully illustrated, this collector’s item will equip you with the knowledge and understanding you need to deepen your faith in God, and equip you to share the Gospel.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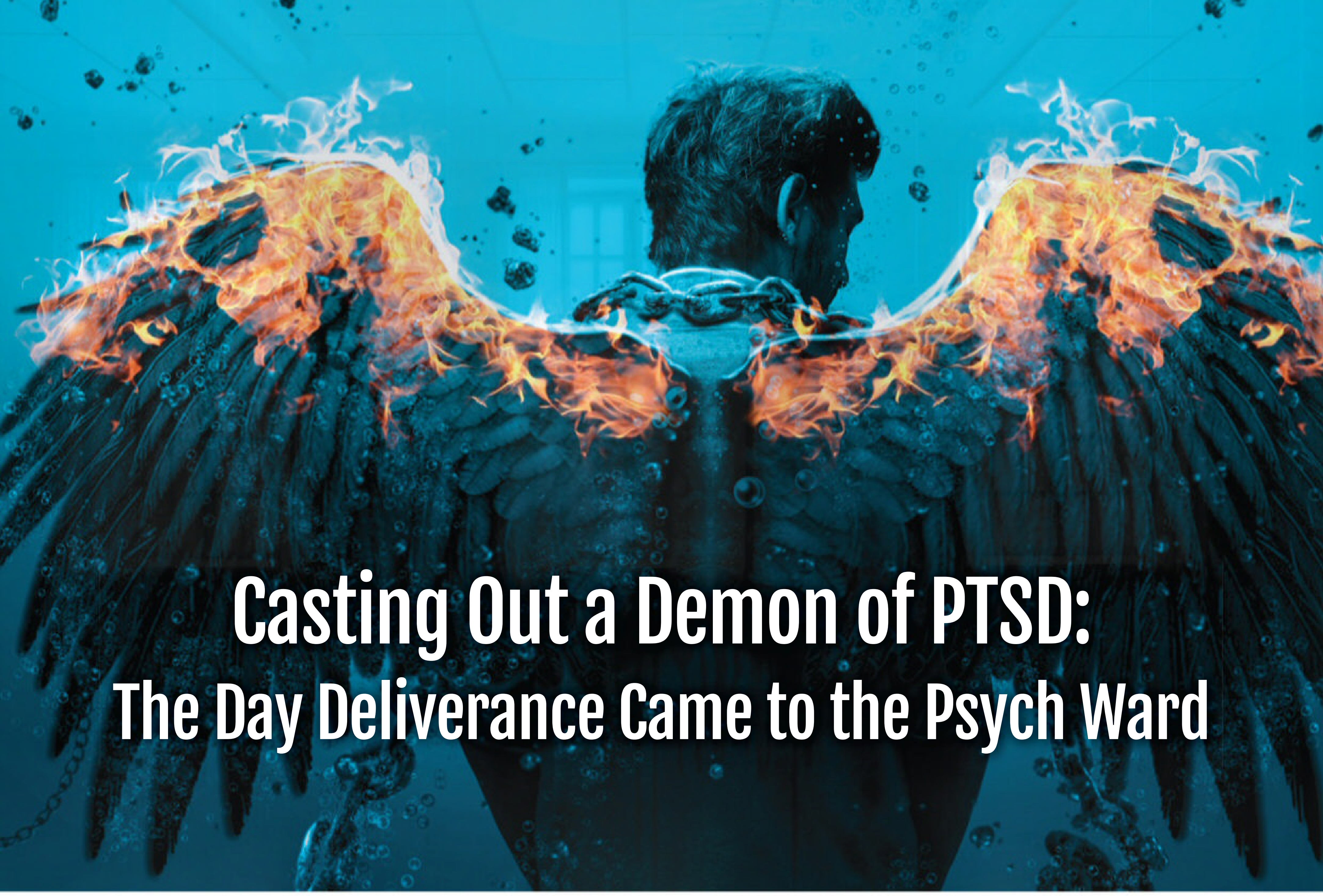


Casting Out a Demon of PTSD:

The Day Deliverance Came to the Psych Ward

—by Chad MacDonald

It seems that as we read New Testament scriptures, Jesus and the early Church cast out demons everywhere they went. With regularity, demon power was confronted and driven out of the lives of the people. In fact, it is the casting out of demons that is the very first sign we are told would accompany those who believe. Yet, when comparing the frequency of deliverance ministry in the gospels and the book of Acts to the modern Western Church, something seems off.

> “Do you think I’m crazy?” With tears in his eyes he stared at me, desperate...

Oppression in the psych ward

A few years ago, I was summoned to a hospital psychiatric floor in order to minister to an army veteran who was suffering from severe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). He had reported hearing voices in his head and was having frequent hallucinations, which drove him to suicidal and reckless behaviour.

I soon arrived at the hospital, checked into the floor, and was granted access to the wing. Immediately, I could sense the demonic oppression on that floor. I proceeded towards the area where I was to meet with the young man. As I walked down the hallway, I watched as patients who were clearly tormented by demons darted across the hallway to avoid me. The cosmic powers of darkness knew I had arrived. Demonic power recognises authority and quickly moves to avoid confrontation with a power with which they cannot contend—the power of God.

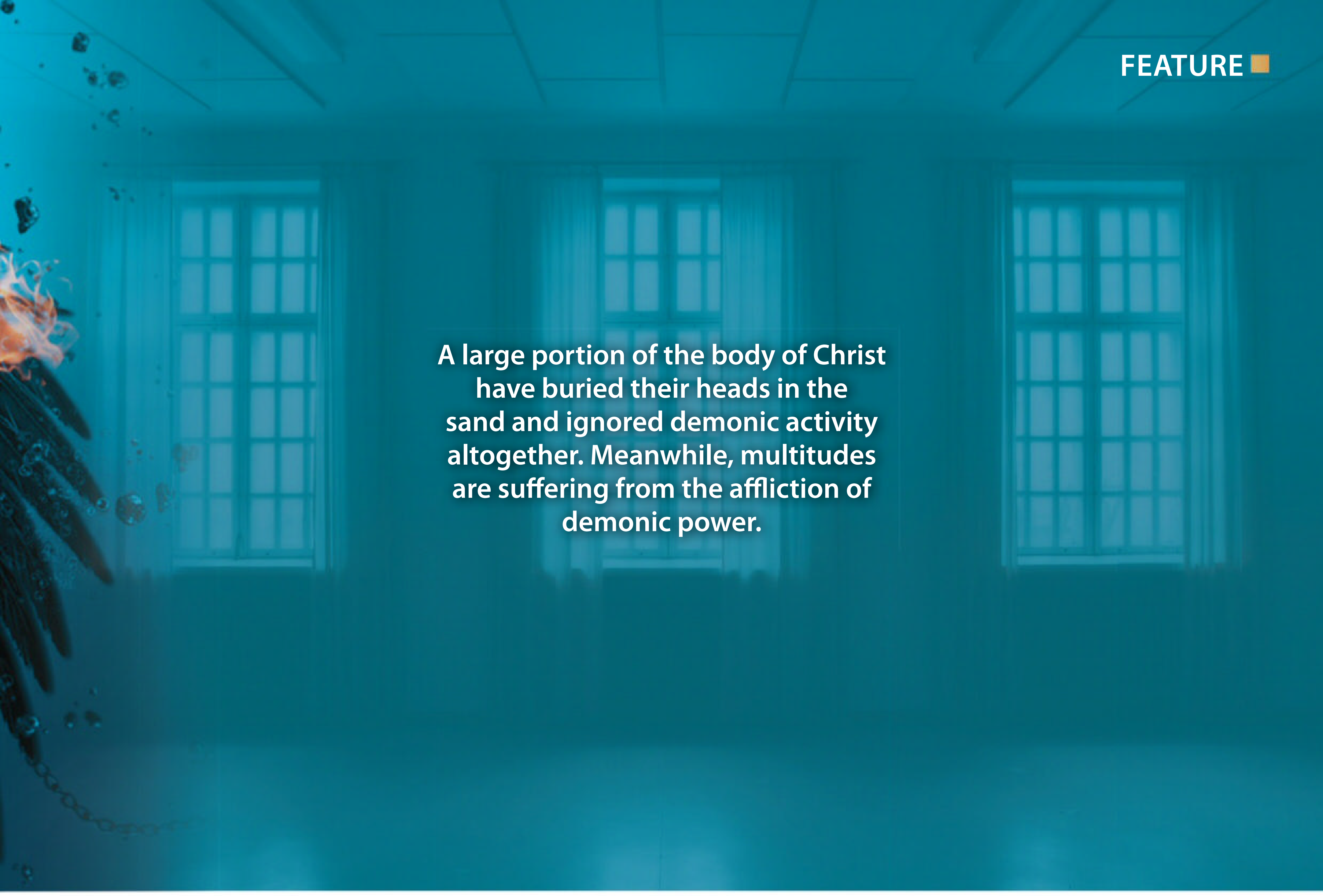
The moment that I stepped onto that floor, anointing and divine authority invaded that place. It sent shockwaves through that wing as demons literally ran for cover.

‘Do you think I’m crazy?’

Sitting alone at a table, I found the young veteran awaiting my arrival. He looked at me and said, “Do you think I’m crazy?” With tears in his eyes he stared at me, desperate for freedom. “No sir, you are not crazy. You are being tormented by demons and I have come today to set you free!” I responded as I laid my hands on him and commanded those spirits, “Come out.”

The power of God

Right there in the middle of that conference room in the psychiatric wing of that hospital, the power of God hit that young man. A clearness suddenly flooded his eyes. Jesus Christ set him free that day and delivered him from that horrible, demonic bondage. I went on to lead that man to saving faith in Christ that day. Truly—that day, hell lost another one. He was free! Such a powerful change had occurred in this man that the following day, the medical staff immediately released him to his wife.



A large portion of the body of Christ have buried their heads in the sand and ignored demonic activity altogether. Meanwhile, multitudes are suffering from the affliction of demonic power.

Many are afflicted!

Almost one-third of all of Jesus' commands relating to intervention involved casting out of demons. Sadly, this ratio is not commensurate to what is practiced in the modern church today. A large portion of the body of Christ have buried their heads in the sand and ignored demonic activity altogether. Meanwhile, multitudes are suffering from the affliction of demonic power.

Anti-supernatural worldview

This anti-supernatural worldview that has crept into the church has provided the perfect cover for the enemy to creep into the lives of people undetected. This is the reason why both church and life go on as usual without any dramatic manifestations of demons. Because of this, it is wrongly assumed that these kinds of things only happen on "the mission field." Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jesus set him free that day and delivered him from that horrible bondage.

Evil spirits are not threatened

The reason why these evil spirits can operate and go undetected inside the confines of the modern church is that they are not threatened. You see, demonic power responds to only two things — authority and the anointing! That's the reason most Christians can go their entire lives and never even witness deliverance, much less participate in one. Demons only manifest and are driven to the light in the presence of authority and anointing.

Sending panic into darkness

Sadly, because so many churches today are void of both, the people will remain bound. It was the presence of the anointing upon Jesus that caused the demonic outbursts in the synagogue. When the anointing is combined with an individual walking in authority, it sends panic into the realms of darkness.

"Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, 'What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.'" – Luke 4:36

CHAD MACDONALD *is the founder of Revival Fire World Ministries, author, international revivalist, and prophetic minister. Visit revivalfirewm.com*

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Getting to Know God

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

—by Dr Victor Kuligin

Up to this point in our monthly series on God and His nature, we have dealt primarily with attributes of God that only He possesses. Theologically, we call these **God's incommunicable attributes**. For example, God alone is all-powerful, unchanging, and present everywhere. God doesn't "communicate" or share these attributes with any other being.

But there are attributes of God that He does share with other beings. These communicable attributes will be our focus in the coming articles, and we'll specifically see how, as Christians, we are meant to display these attributes in our own lives.

Being holy means being set apart

We often think of moral purity when we hear the word holiness, and that is certainly an aspect of it. But to be holy primarily means to be set apart. To make this clear, consider things the Bible refers to as holy. There is holy ground, as when Moses approached the burning bush. A day could be considered holy. There is holy fruit and holy water. There are holy buildings such as the tabernacle and temple. Even rooms within these buildings are considered holier than others (e.g., the Holy of Holies). There are holy courts, chambers, furniture, and tools used in the tabernacle. Tithes and offerings are holy. Jerusalem is considered a holy city (Exod 3:5; 16:23; Lev 19:24; Num 5:17; Exod 40:9; 1 Chron 29:3; Exod 26:33-34; Isa 62:9; Ezek 42:13; 1 Chron 9:29; Lev 27:30; Neh 11:1; Isa 52:1).

> To be holy primarily means to be set apart for a special purpose.

None of these items has a moral quality to them. When speaking of ground as holy, this can hardly mean sinless. Rather, it means to be set apart for a special purpose. In this sense, it is *the* fundamental quality of God. God is set apart from all other beings—He is a one-of-a-kind Being.

Are we set apart?

Holiness is a communicable attribute of God because He expects us to emulate it. That is why both in the Old and New Testaments, God calls His people to be *"holy, for I am holy"* – Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16.

Holiness is sorely missing in our culture and unfortunately in many of our churches today. Far too often, Christians are more concerned with being liked by the world instead of being different or set apart from it. In fact, Christians are commanded to *"pursue"* holiness, *"without which no one will see the Lord"* – Hebrews 12:14. This is because *"God is a consuming fire."* – Hebrews 12:29

Holy fear

One reason why holiness is so lacking from our society is because the fear of God is absent. The Apostle Paul, in his diatribe against sinners, quotes Psalm 36:1 when he writes, *"there is no fear of God before their eyes"* – Romans 3:18. The lack of fear in a holy God is the main driving force for evil.

But wise people fear God. It should be the natural tendency for sinners, like Adam who after eating the forbidden fruit hid from God in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:10). Even the prophet Isaiah, when he had his vision of God's throne, was struck with terror. *"Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"* – Isaiah 6:5. Why? Because the seraphim were crying out, *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts"* – Isaiah 6:3. People who don't fear God foolishly revel in their own supposed self-righteousness.

Unholy entanglement

It is a knowledge of God's holiness and His righteous anger against sin that should cause us to shun wickedness. However, we often struggle with this, falling into *"the sin which so easily ensnares us"* – Hebrews 12:1. For this reason, God gives His Holy Spirit to every born-again person. Note that God's Spirit is holy; He too is set apart and He sets us apart from the rest of the world. The more we are in tune with Him—the more we walk with Him and allow

Holiness is sorely missing in our culture and unfortunately in many of our churches today. Far too often, Christians are more concerned with being liked by the world instead of being different or set apart from it.

Him to guide us—the more we become like God's Son Jesus.

Being sanctified

We call the process by which every believer is made holy *sanctification*. The word comes from the same root word in the Greek for holy. Paul writes that believers are *"sanctified … in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God"* – 1 Corinthians 6:11

But our sanctification is not simply a passive thing. We are called to also participate in it, to make daily choices that positively affect our growth in holiness. Do good. Shun evil. Read the Holy Scriptures, since Jesus tells us God's Word is also an agent of sanctification (John 17:17). Paul commands, *"let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* – 2 Corinthians 7:1

One reason why holiness is so lacking from our society is because the fear of God is absent.

The Holy Child

Fortunately for sinners like us, there is a means by which we can stand before a holy God. In fact, this month we rejoice in this God-given way when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's anointed One, the Messiah chosen to bring salvation to those who are perishing. That is why the angels in speaking to the shepherds called the baby to be born the *"Holy One"* – Luke 1:35. The Son of God was set apart to do what only He could do: redeem humanity from its sin.

This Christmas, thank the Father for His precious gift of Jesus, *"a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Pet 1:19), sent to make us holy and sanctified before God. ■

RUACH
MINISTRIES
Destiny Calls

Entering The Gates!

With the onset of the Christmas season and the year 2022, we study the Biblical principle of the gates. In the spiritual realm there are gates that control the seasons in a year. Studying the early traditions of the Christmas season, we understand that it was a season for the worship of pagan Gods. The Celts in their worship of the sun goddess Aine, called on this goddess to remove evil spirits that would influence their lives. Much celebration at the bonfire would take place and sacrifices were made to Aine. Worshippers would dress up in their best clothes and jewellery. Most jewels would have an artefact attached in the form of a sun – this tradition would open the gateway over the home, the territory, or the land for evil spirits to take control.

The gate of blessing and increase

How would the gateway in the Christmas season be opened in our personal lives? And how would the effect of this gateway influence us? Considering the fact that in the Biblical Christmas story, the wise men brought gifts to Jesus at His birth, we should understand the two fold implication. The gifts were a celebration of honour and worship to the King of kings – only the best and most highly prized gifts were given. The Bible promises us that as we give, there is a reciprocal effect. We set ourselves up within the sowing and reaping cycle, which opens the gate of blessing and increase.

The gate of mammon

Secondly, if we are not careful we open mammon's gate to control and direct our finances. The fruit of mammon's gate is shown in the outworking of debt and mismanagement of our finances. Many are controlled by the enslavement that this gate has on their lives. The consequences of entering and partnering with this gate influence our emotions in the way finances are spent during this season. The family structure is compromised due to the debt inflicted on it, which often results in poverty.

Don't put yourself into poverty this Christmas

Christmas is a season for giving, let's protect ourselves. As we partner with heaven's gate, we set ourselves up for sustainable prosperity. Have you considered various types of gifts: time, service, words of affirmation, physical touch, and a *small* material gift? These gifts are inexpensive and have long term rewards for family members. ■

…This message will be continued in the next issue of JOY! Magazine. Make sure to pick up your copy!

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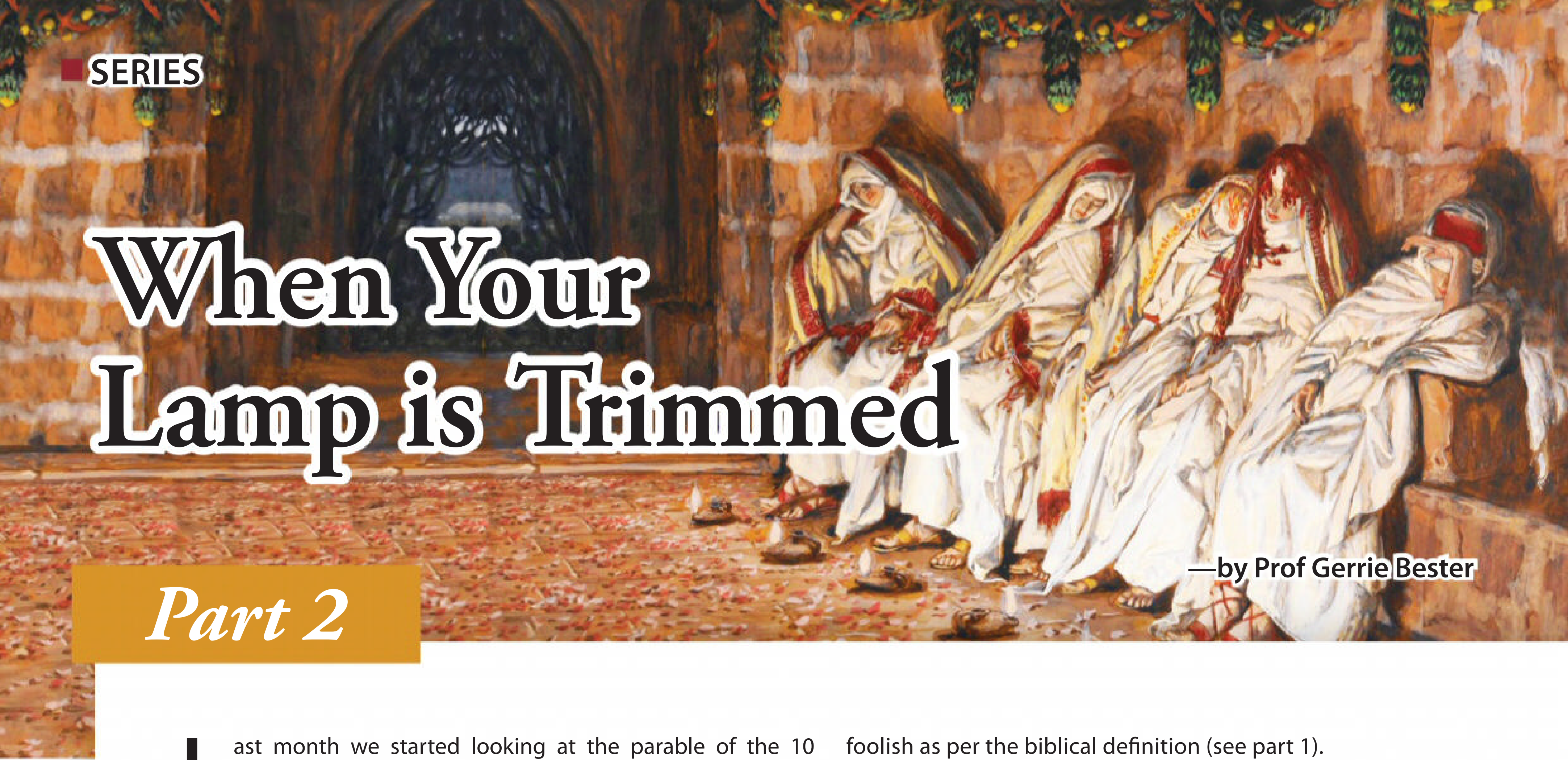


When Your Lamp is Trimmed

Part 2

—by Prof Gerrie Bester

Last month we started looking at the parable of the 10 Virgins in Matthew 25, and the deeper images concealed within this story. We looked at the definitions in the Word of Abba Father with regards to being either wise or foolish as believers. We furthermore saw that the 10 virgins all went out with the expectation of meeting the Groom, meaning that in this parable *Yeshua* (Jesus) is referring to those inside the Church and not the heathens who outright reject Him. We now continue to look at the deeper meaning in this section of scripture…

The meaning of 'virgin'

We are going to look at the Hebrew and Greek pictures attached to a few key words in this scripture. At the end of this article, we will piece them all together to experience a very vivid, mind-blowing revelation. The Greek word for virgin refers to "someone who proclaims to abstain from moral uncleanliness." In other words – one who proclaims to be a believer or Christian. It is interesting that the Greek word for virgin in this scripture includes both men and women.

When we are "crushed", we are to shine brighter because of the One who resides in us.

The number 10

Next, we can look at the Hebrew meaning of the number 10. We see that this number refers to perfection and harmony, or, the fullness of Abba Father's order. In other words – obedience to Him! The Hebrew meaning of the number five, on the other hand, refers to the grace of Abba Father. Looking at the context of this scripture we can see that all the virgins received the same grace. The hand of Abba Father extended grace to both those who were wise (there were 5) and those who were foolish (also 5 in number). We will never be able to blame Abba Father for not extending His grace to us, should we reject the invitation to be in covenant relationship with Him by acting foolish as per the biblical definition (see part 1).

The meaning of the lamp

Both the Greek and Hebrew words for 'lamp' in the Word of Abba Father is an action word that means to shine forth or to radiate. Picture this for one moment: Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). He is also the living Word (John 1:14). The Word of Abba Father furthermore teaches us that His Word is the lamp unto our feet (Psa 119:105). Proverbs 6:23 reads as follows: *"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."*

Oil, right through the Word of Abba Father, is a picture of Holy Spirit. But why is this? Oil comes from the fruit of the olive, right? When an olive is pressed, it brings forth oil. The oil was used in the lamp and caused the lamp to shine forth or radiate light. When we are filled with Holy Spirit, we bare the fruit (Gal 5:22-23). It is only when we are filled with Holy Spirit that we can be light bearers (He is the light) and radiate obedience to the Word of Abba Father. When we are "crushed" by the world, we are to shine brighter because of the One who resides in us. This is the exact picture that is painted in Leviticus 24:2 which reads: *"Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually."*

What does it mean to trim your lamp?

The last word or action that we must look at before we put all the pictures together is the action of trimming your lamp. Matthew 25:7 reads: *"Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps."*

What does it mean to trim your lamp? It is very significant, although many times we miss this. It was at this stage of trimming that the five foolish virgins realised that they did not have enough oil. In order to trim your lamp, you would cut off the burnt part of the wick. In doing this, you would pull out a

> **We will never be able to blame Abba Father for not extending His grace to us, should we reject the invitation to be in covenant relationship with Him by acting foolish as per the biblical definition.**

new part of the wick in order to cut it. When your lamp was trimmed it would shine brighter and the light would be spread more evenly again. But listen to this – the pulling out of the wick tested the depth of the oil. When you trimmed the lamp by pulling out the wick in order for the lamp to shine brighter, you were required to add oil. Can you see the picture coming forth in this?

Putting these pictures together we see the following:

The 10 virgins are those who proclaim to be believers, expecting to go out and meet the Groom when the shofar sounds. All (in church) will not be ready to meet the Groom though. All are invited and all receive the same grace from Abba Father. We, as believers, can choose to either carry the Word of the Father with wisdom (those who hear and obey the Word – those who allow the Word of Abba Father to work in them and through them), or we can choose to carry the Word of Abba Father in a foolish way. This means that we proclaim to be believers and pretend to take council from Abba Father, but reject true obedience to the Word through our own will or walking in cheap grace. Those who are truly filled with Holy Spirit will bear the fruit of the Spirit, which brings forth the oil so that the Word can shine from our lives, even when hard-pressed by the world. This will be the bride that will be ready for the coming of Messiah. When their lamps are trimmed, they will shine brighter than ever.

> **It is only when we are filled with Holy Spirit that we can be light bearers (He is the light) and radiate obedience.**

It is important to understand the following:

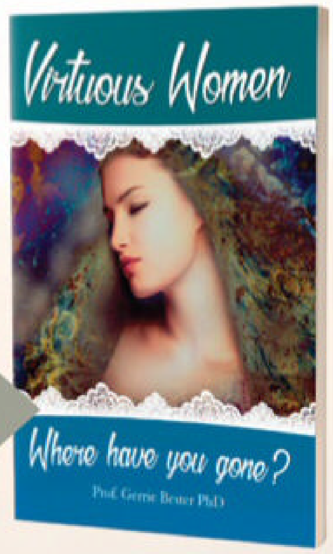
All 10 were invited to the wedding feast. All 10 had the expectation to go out and meet the Groom. All 10 had lamps that were burning earlier that night. All 10 slept (we all get tired at times). But what is the difference? We will see in our next article… ▪

PROF GERRIE BESTER *PhD CA(SA) leads Roaring Truth Ministries. Email info@roaringtruth.co.za. He is also the Dean of Emet Academy of Learning. Visit Emetgroup.co.za for more information.*

LIFE-CHANGING
BOOKS
By Prof Gerrie Bester

Virtuous Women

R190



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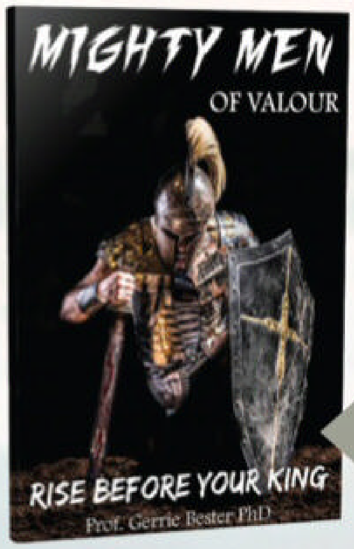

Mighty Men of Valour

R190

"Caught up in the world's lies, we battle to rise as the mighty men of valour that Abba Father designed us to be. What if we were to see the true picture from the Word of Abba Father – the picture He sees when He looks at us as men?"

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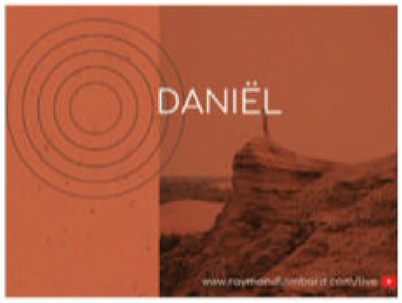
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Woensdagaand @ 19:00
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"Wat sê die Bybel" is a live stream broadcast about end time events and faith issues with questions and answers about the Bible.

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HEBREËRS
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Ons reis deur die boek Hebreërs

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Koninkryksleer – Bybelstudie

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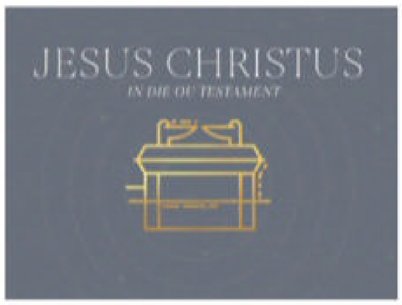
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IN DIE OU TESTAMENT

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REVELATION

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Leaving a Lasting Legacy

—by Dr Brian DeVries

What do you want to be when you grow up? This is a question young kids often ask each other when they think about getting bigger. It is a good question to ask, and not just for children. We all should ask ourselves this question as we reflect on the future.

Our work in God's sight

But let me change the question a bit: "What legacy do you want to leave once you are old?" or "What value will your work have in fifty years?" These questions focus on what will remain of all our efforts after we have died. These are good questions since they motivate serious reflection on the purpose of our work.

But these questions are only stepping-stones to a much more important consideration: What will remain eternally of all our efforts after they have been tested by God's perfect judgement? Now, this is a serious question indeed!

Wise construction workers

The Apostle Paul answers this question in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. He describes the Christian ministry as the work of a skilful builder. Christians doing ministry service are like construction workers. They are building a temple for God's glory. All true believers are busy building. They work with different types of building materials – hay, wood, stone, gold, etc. – to construct a beautiful house of worship.

> **Our work of temporary value will be burnt; only things of eternal value will remain.**

But not all work is equal. The Bible says that some work will have lasting value while other work will be burned up when tested by God's fire of judgement: *"the fire will test what sort of work each one has done"* – 1 Corinthians 3:13. Our work of temporary value – hay and wood – will be burnt; only things of eternal value – stone and gold – will remain.

Examples, bad and good

For example, Ananias and Sapphira gave a large sum of money to the early church (Acts 5). This gift appeared to others as a wonderful work with lasting value. But God judged their work with His perfect discerning judgement. God found their motives to be sinful, and so they died. When tested by fire, their work had no lasting value.

Barnabas, however, is an opposite example. He also gave a large sum of money to the church. God alone knew his heart, for he too was a sinner like us all. Yet God's Word describes him as a good man, full of the Spirit and faith (Acts 11:24). By God's grace, his efforts had lasting value.

Building on the foundation

All true believers are building on the same foundation (1 Cor 3:11,14) – faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work of salvation. There is no other foundation; building on anything else will not withstand the judgement fire. The reason Barnabas's work had lasting value is because, by grace alone, he trusted in Christ alone and was building only on this eternal foundation.

The Apostle Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 3 focuses not on the only foundation of faith in Christ alone, but rather on our faithful work that must be built on this foundation. Paul describes the importance of good works in the Christian life. He cautions that while many people are busy doing so-called good works, not all human efforts in ministry have equal lasting value.

Efforts with lasting value

The efforts of every Christian will be tested by fire. This test by fire on the Judgement Day will publicly display the lasting value of each work: *"each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done"* – 1 Corinthians 3:13. The eternal value of all our efforts will be judged at the end of this world. Then outward appearances, popularity or influence, social status, and the perceptions of others will have no lasting value in themselves. God's final test will publicly display the secrete motives and desires of our hearts.

God will graciously reward those true believers who, by faith in Christ with the Spirit's power, have faithfully served to build a lasting contribution for God's glory.

Paul goes even further: *"If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward"* – 1 Corinthians 3:14. In other words, God will graciously reward those true believers who, by faith in Christ with the Spirit's power, have faithfully served to build a lasting contribution for God's glory.

The important question

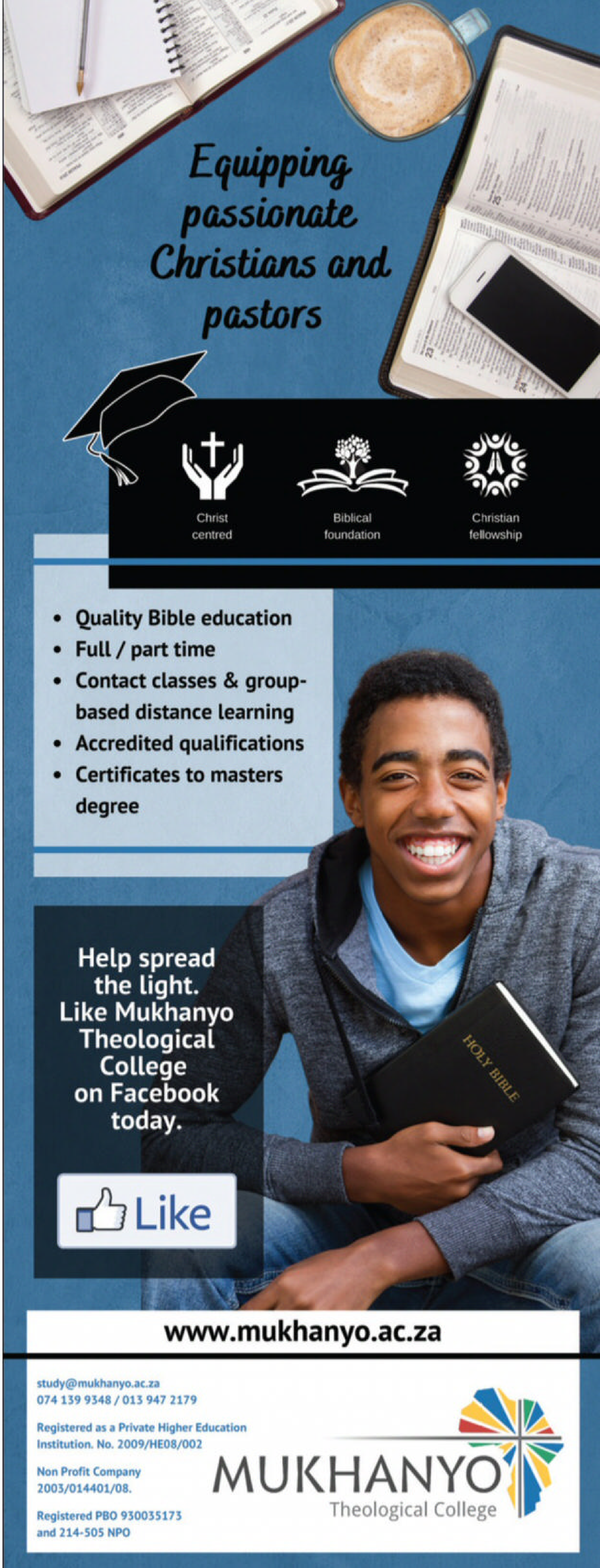
So what do you want to be when you grow up? Or, put differently, what eternal legacy do you want to leave after all your work has been tested by fire? These are good questions because they force us to examine seriously all the efforts that keep us busy from day to day.

A wise builder is very careful to examine every aspect of the building process. We all must do the same. Here are a few questions to help you examine your efforts:

> **Christians doing ministry service are like construction workers. They are building a temple for God's glory.**

1. Are you building only on the foundation of Christ's finished work? Have you been justified by faith alone in Christ alone?
2. Are you building a temple for God's glory, or are you building something for yourself?
3. Will your building materials survive the final fire? Are your good works of lasting value in God's sight, or do they only have superficial value to the undiscerning?
4. What value will your present efforts have after you have after God's final judgement? ▪

DR BRIAN DEVRIES *is Principal and Senior Lecturer at Mukhanyo Theological College. He has planted three churches around Pretoria and also serves as a visiting professor at PRTS in the United States.*



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Year End Challenge 2021

SENDING
HOPE
to the
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OF HOPE

TENSION RISING
IN CHINA

—from Lauren Libby, President and CEO of TWR

This has been an amazing year of ministry for us at TWR. Even while much of the world was gripped with fear due to the Covid pandemic and other world events, TWR pushed forward — opening new avenues of ministry to the glory of God. It has all been possible because of God's provision though the generosity of our donors.

A critical time for ministry

The last several weeks of the year are always a critical time for us. This is when we replenish our general fund, which undergirds so many important projects. We trust in God to provide because we know that *"with God all things are possible."* We rely on devoted partners like you who, as His instruments, make it happen.

We want to be available for His purposes

We need to raise R200 000 to meet our final needs for 2021 and to begin the new year strong. The world will need God's message of hope as much as ever — if not more — in this coming year. We want to be ready for whatever He has planned!

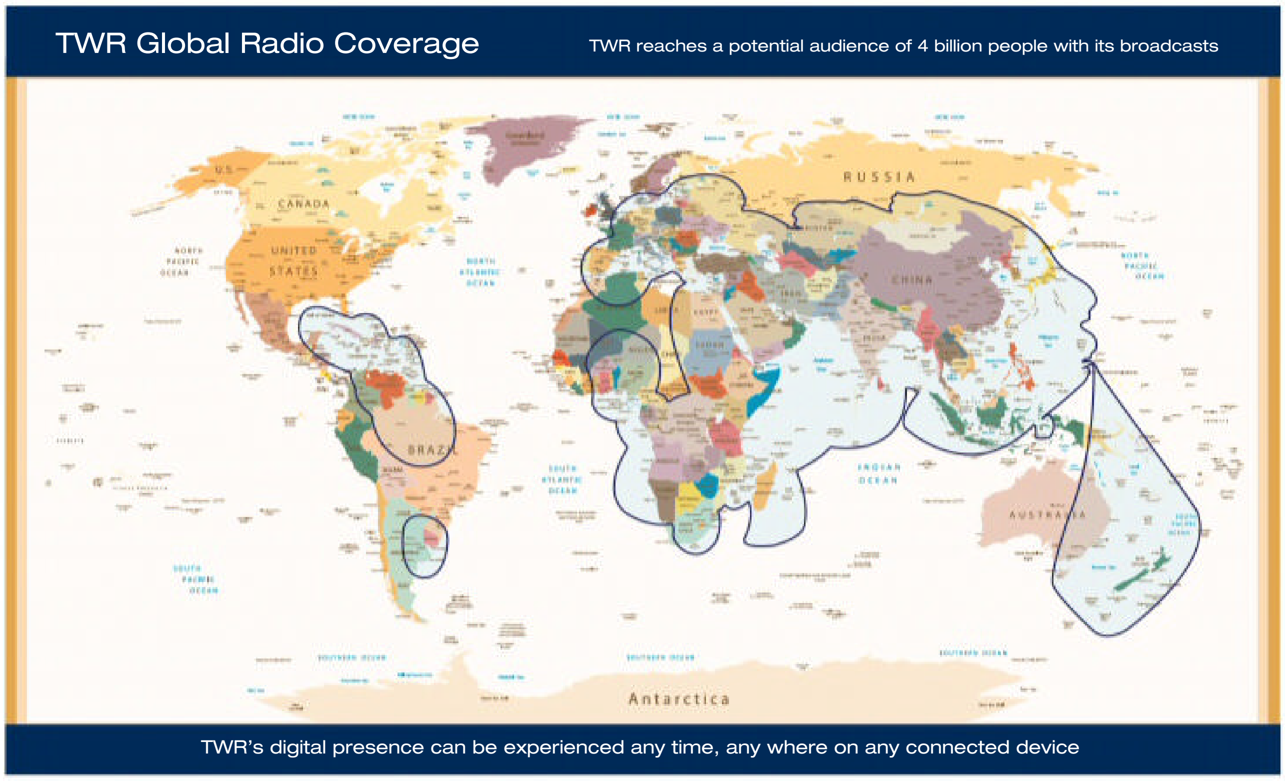
Generous donors will match all donations

So, I'm grateful that we have a wonderful opportunity right now to double the impact of your gift. Once again, a group of faithful supporters have stepped up with a generous gift that they challenge all donors to match. That means that whatever you give today will go twice as far!

But this challenge only lasts until midnight, December 31. So please don't put off your response – don't delay, make your donation today!

TWR Global Radio Coverage

TWR reaches a potential audience of 4 billion people with its broadcasts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TWR's digital presence can be experienced any time, any where on any connected device

The world will need God's message of hope as much as ever — if not more — in this coming year.

Help Muslims
discover Christ
through the
Old Testament

A TROUBLED
CONTINENT
Needs a Lifeline
from You

A strong
tower for
ASIA

Missions that TWR has accomplished:

It's because of our donors that we have been able to make such great strides in 2021. Here are some of the ground-breaking ministries that donors supported in the past year:

- Guam tower restoration — enabling broadcasts into several East Asian countries.
- *TWR Women of Hope* — empowering women with hope and dignity through the Gospel.
- *Mission 66* into China — life-changing lessons drawn from the entire Bible.
- Russian and Eastern European broadcasts — reaching people in the former Soviet Union.
- TWR360 — providing biblical content to the entire world through the internet.
- The Way of Righteousness — helping listeners from other religions understand what the Bible teaches about Christ.
- Ministry into PANI (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and North India) — bringing God's hope amid the political upheaval and persecution in this region.
- A new FM station in Côte d'Ivoire — reaching West Africa with the Good News of Christ.

We are determined to bring the message of Christ to everyone we can, everywhere in the world.

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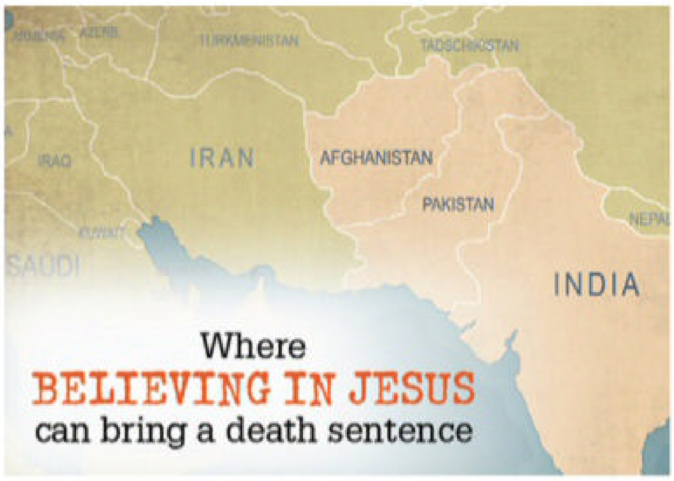
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Where
BELIEVING IN JESUS
can bring a death sentence

BRINGING THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST TO ALL

We are determined to bring the message of Christ to everyone we can, everywhere in the world. Through your valued support, we are already reaching more people than ever.

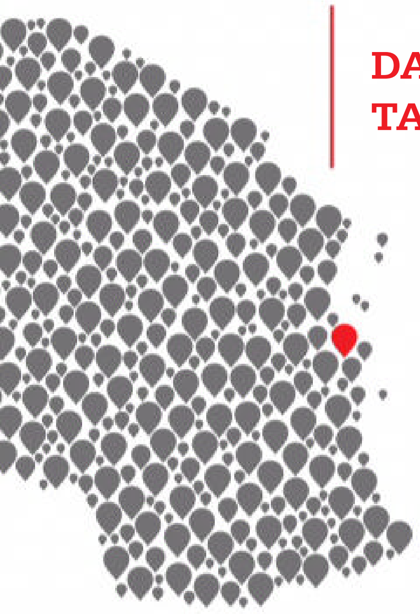
"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." – Galatians 6:9

The world is ready for good news

This is a time of despair for many people. But for those of us who know Christ, it's a time of hope and opportunity. We see the hand of God in events that other people dread. And while some are languishing in fear and hopelessness, they are also more open to the Gospel than ever before.

Pray with us, stand with us

Let us share the Good News with them while we can! As Jesus said, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few"* – Matthew 9:37. Pray with us that God will send more labourers into the harvest. And please continue to support us with your prayers and generous gifts. Thank you! ▪



DAR ES SALAAM,
TANZANIA

CfaN CHRIST FOR ALL NATIONS

30 Gospel Campaigns in 5 Days

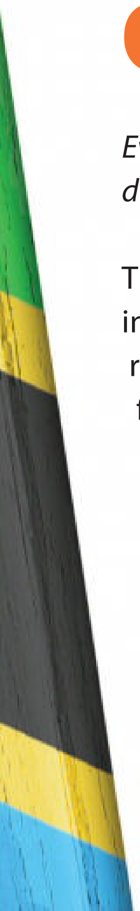
210,553 documented decisions for Jesus!

Once again, a new high-water mark has been reached for Christ for all Nations. In our October "Operation Decapolis", we held six CfaN Gospel Campaigns in six areas of Dar es Salaam, lasting five nights each. That's thirty nights of campaign meetings – in less than a week! Here are just a few of the many testimonies we received, shared by the guest evangelists who preached and ministered in each area.

KIMARA

Evangelist Daniel Kolenda preached one night of every campaign, starting in Kimara. For the other four nights in each area, two guest evangelists (most of them Bootcamp graduates) preached and prayed for the sick. In Kimara, Evangelists Denis Artyushevskiy and Evelina Smane brought the Good News.

The first testimony is one we will never forget for the rest of our lives. We saw a mother walking with one of the counsellors, crying and screaming, "My God, my God". Brady, the campaign director, quickly ran down to find out what was happening. As he approached her, the mother wept, saying that since her son was five, he was unable to move or walk. As we prayed, he began moving to the sound of the worship music. On stage, Denis asked the boy to try to get out of his wheelchair. The crowd went silent as the boy started moving back and forth, sliding down to place his feet on the ground. Using his hands to brace himself, he stood up, and the crowd began to roar. His mother moved the wheelchair away, and Denis asked the boy to walk towards him. He began taking small steps, without any assistance. The band and crowd began worshiping and chanting the name of Jesus as the boy then walked to the other side of the stage and began dancing.



GONGO LA MBOTO

Evangelists Lukas Repert and Daniel Garcia (both Bootcamp graduates) described the campaign in Gongo La Mboto as a "festival of miracles".

The most holy moment of the night was the call for salvation. As the invitation was given to receive salvation through Jesus Christ, people repented by the thousands. Former Muslims across the field filled out decision cards to get connected with local churches. It was their day of salvation! Then we prayed for the sick. We didn't even have a chance to call people forward. They were already running to the stage to testify. One lady had not been able to walk for six years and came on stage partially healed. Daniel Garcia prayed for her, and she received her full healing right there on the platform in front of everyone's eyes!

JANGWANI

Evangelists Jim and Kathy Leamon and Evangelist Jacob Ebersole were stationed in the district of Jangwani, where Evangelist Daniel Kolenda joined them to preach on the third night.

One man had been in a car accident 10 years ago, leaving him with a spinal cord injury. He could barely walk or stand, even with crutches. During prayer, he felt the power of God on him and then strength poured into his legs. He stood up from his chair and began to walk without any help and without his crutches. The grounds we chose for this campaign used to be a trash dump for the local people. As we stood on that field that was once a garbage heap, joy filled our hearts. These beautiful people, whose lives had been full of the world's trash, were now renewed and made clean in God's sight, standing on grounds also redeemed in their own neighborhood. What a moving and prophetic picture.

KIGAMBONI

To preach at all six campaigns in five days, Daniel Kolenda had to preach at two events on the fourth night – another first for CfaN. The first of these was Kigamboni, where Evangelists Joe Turnbull and Randy Roberts were ministering. Evangelist Roberts shared this story.

I interviewed a precious older woman who had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for years, unable to do the simplest of tasks or even walk properly. We wept together as we thanked King Jesus for what He had done. No more shuffling to the market, no more unfulfilled desires to pick up her grandchildren. One more individual among thousands changed by the preaching of the pure Gospel. All because you sent us, we preached the Gospel, she believed it and "called on the name of the Lord".

MBAGALA

Mbagala was the second campaign Evangelist Daniel Kolenda preached on that night. On the ground for the whole event were Evangelists Rob Enge and Roselyne Ayeola. Rob Enge is Daniel Kolenda's Executive Assistant, and he's an evangelist. This was the first time he preached at a CfaN campaign.

Before arriving, I received updates from our Campaign Director of the challenges they faced. Churches had never been able to host big gatherings due to the dominant religion there. Permits were never granted and access to locations was always denied. But we pressed onward in faith! Our permits were approved, and the venue was released. At the field dedication, where local churches pray for the campaign before it starts, a witch came to see what was happening. As the power of God was moving, she fell to her knees. One of the pastors prayed for her and she accepted Jesus as her Saviour! She immediately turned over all the witchcraft items she had brought.

KAWE

Evangelists Levi Lutz and Macoby Donaldson each preached two nights in Kawe. For Macoby Donaldson, it was the first time he had ever preached at a campaign.

On the first night, I walked up to pray for the sick after Levi Lutz finished preaching and I gave it everything I have. I did exactly as I learnt in Evangelism Bootcamp and it worked! So many people were healed. A woman was brought on stage on a stretcher, unable to walk at all. As I watched them bring her, I had feelings of worry. But what came after that was belief and faith that God is so good, and the Word of God is true. We prayed for her right there in front of tens of thousands of people. She smiled as she took our hands, took her first steps in several years, and walked off that platform on her own two feet!

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Anointed & Appointed
for a time such as this

—interview with Edward Ackerman

I am Edward Ackerman, a full-time Evangelist and the founder of LightLife Ministries. I grew up as a foster child not knowing my biological parents. I led a life of gangsterism, drug addiction, and imprisonment – which is my personal testimony. I eventually surrendered my life to Jesus after being brought back to life miraculously after multiple fatal gunshot wounds. I completed three years of Bible study and was then ordained into pastoral ministry in 2007, after which I was led by God into full-time evangelistic ministry. God has blessed me with my awesome wife Anthea, and we have 3 wonderful children, Althea, Ethan, and Amy; all who love God very much. I am thankful that they are very supportive of the ministry. We reside in Cape Town and we just love working together in the harvest. I am indeed a changed man, totally surrendered to the will of God, a fiery evangelist, anointed and appointed for a time such as this.

I am a fiery evangelist, anointed and appointed for a time such as this.

Q. Please explain to us what LightLife is?

LightLife Ministry is an inter-denominational evangelistic organisation whose singular passion and sole objective is the winning of souls through mass crusades, tent crusades, open air crusades, school crusades, and one-on-one encouragements and prayer meetings. Our heartbeat is not to plant churches, but to strengthen and fruitfully increase those already in existence.

I was privileged to have been selected as the personal driver for Evangelists Reinhard Bonnke and Daniel Kolenda at *The Fire Conference* in Cape Town in 2009. On the final night of the conference, both these evangelists laid hands on me and a burning passion and a deep hunger for souls ignited within me. From this burning passion, LightLife Ministries was birthed under the banner of Christ for All Nations (CFAN), the ministry of Evangelists Reinhard Bonnke and Daniel Kolenda. We are proud to be associated with this ministry. Together, we want to plunder hell and populate heaven.

Q. What work does LightLife do in the community?

LightLife Ministries is very passionate about winning the lost at any cost. In preparation for our crusades, we claimed the mission to equip and train local churches for the supreme task of evangelism and community prayer walks. We meet with church leaders from different communities across South Africa and introduce them to evangelism.

Then we have community outreaches where we go to farms and hand out food parcels, together with a Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Our communities are in desperate need of assistance, especially during the dire winter months. We see many children barefooted in the cold – it's not a pretty sight – but their faces light up when they receive a cup of hot soup; it makes our hearts happy again. Then we have our annual Christmas celebration party where we treat less fortunate children to a *Light a Life Gift Box* and a meal to make the children aware of the true meaning of Christmas, that our Saviour was been born at this time, and thus the reason to celebrate.

Lightlife

Q. What does a typical day in ministry look like for you?

My day starts with my morning prayers and reading my Bible. Meditating on the Word of God and having quiet time in the presence of the Lord is my lifestyle. I tend to the ministry's admin, including catching up and updating our social media page. I then start planning and strategising on the way forward, all in between meetings, school crusades, outreaches, and so much more – but all this is fuelled by a burning passion to see the lost saved and the captives set free.

Q. Can you share a testimony from one of your outreaches?

We had a phenomenal Open Air Crusade in Lotus River recently. We had a few challenges at first, but God is faithful. We experienced gale force winds like only Cape Town can, and while I was preaching a simple Gospel message under the power of the Holy Spirit and Fire, it suddenly began to rain. What struck me was the fact that the people didn't run for shelter from the rain, but they stood firm, wanting deliverance, healing, and restoration. Wow! Multitudes responded boldly to the altar call to surrender to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour with tears rolling down their faces, soaking wet from the rain, but they didn't mind. I prayed and laid hands on the sick. Two ladies who came to the crusade wheelchair-bound due to suffering from strokes had been healed and raised from their wheelchairs by the power of God, and left the crusade pushing their wheelchairs! What a mighty God we serve!

Our heartbeat is to strengthen and fruitfully increase churches.

Q. How can our readers support you in this time?

During the many years I have had the privilege and grace to be in the ministry, I have experienced the power of prayer. As Jesus is the foundation to every mighty believer, so intercession is the foundation to a successful expanding ministry. Intercession is the source of breakthrough, vision, purpose, and force that carries our ministry and spiritual leaders through every situation. Therefore I personally ask, would you please intercede for us as we do our part to advance the Kingdom of God. I believe that as we seek God and His Kingdom first, everything else will follow. Whether that includes finances, the anointing, or simply just an answer from God. We need your prayers and consensus to strengthen us. For when two or more agree on any term upon the earth, it will be done for them in Heaven (Matt 18:19).

If the Lord lays it on your heart to partner with us, either by sowing a seed towards our finances or by volunteering at one of our upcoming events, please feel free to contact us at 079 498 8854 or by email 4LightLife2@gmail.com ■

God Judged Jesus

—by Tamryn Klintworth

What took place in the invisible realm during the six hours during which Christ hung on the Cross goes beyond all earthly understanding. Yet, we must make our most vehement attempt to grasp the ungraspable, with the help of His Spirit within us and His scripture before us.

The Father's role in the crucifixion

It was not man who laid the sins of the world upon Jesus. Rather, it was God. We read in Isaiah 53:6: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."* The Father plays an integral part in the crucifixion story. After all, He was through Christ reconciling the world back to Himself. He carefully combed through the lives of every person who had lived, was living, or would one day live – finding each erring moment, both miniscule and major. Then, He placed every sin and the death penalty attached to it upon His sinless Son.

Transfer of liability

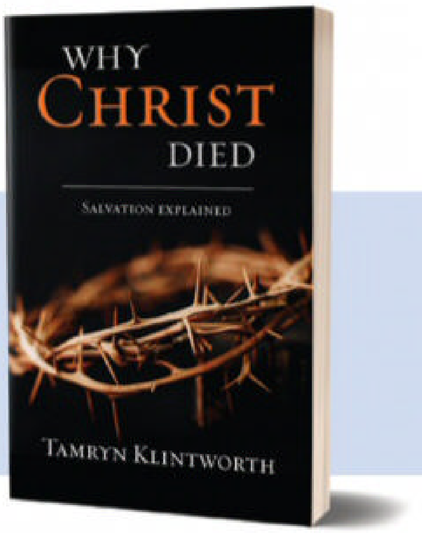
Scripture tells us that darkness covered the earth during the three hours prior to Jesus' death on the cross: *"It was now only midday, yet the whole world became dark for three hours as the light of the sun faded away"* – Luke 23:44, TPT. It would not be far-fetched to believe that this was when the transfer of liability occurred from humanity to Christ. It was as if nature was responding to all that filth being laid upon the Light of Life. It was if the Father could not bear the sun to shine while He, through whom that sun was created, was shrouded in a veil of condemnation. During these three hours of darkness and doom, God stood as Judge and Jesus as Accused. During these three hours of harrowing gloom, God judged Jesus. God laid our sins upon His Son and judged Him for them, Jesus dying under the weight of that judgement. The Father then nailed those guilty verdicts to the Cross, declaring: *"Judgment has taken place! The death penalties for these trespasses have been borne! They cannot be judged again."*

When you become a child of the Almighty God, Heaven becomes your guaranteed destination.

Believe in Jesus!

What does this mean for the one who believes that Jesus died on the Cross for their sins? Their sins are deemed already judged and the death sentences attached to them already executed in the Person of Christ! They will never come into judgement. They become a child of the Almighty God and Heaven becomes their guaranteed destination. Believe in Jesus, today! ■

TAMRYN KLINTWORTH *is a crusade evangelist and founder of In His Name Ministries (inhisname.global). Her most recent book, "Why Christ Died" is available from CUM Books, Exclusive Books and Bargain Books across South Africa.*



WIN

Stand a chance to WIN a copy of Tamryn's latest book, Why Christ Died. Email info@joymag.co.za to enter!

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KOER is al meer as 50 000 keer afgelaai. Dus pronk die maklike oplossing tot 'opregte liefde-in-die-moderne-era' met derduisende lede wie in hul hartstaal wil gesels.

Bekende akteur, Armand Aucamp, een van die stigterslede van KOER vertel:

"Ons doel met KOER was 'n platform waar enkellopendes met ooreenstemmende waardes in hul hartstaal kan kliek. Dis vir ons belangrik om KOER veilig, eerbaar en eenvoudig te hou. Met meer as 5 miljoen boodskappe reeds gestuur, honderde suksesverhale en dosyne verlowingsverhale, is KOER 'n droomplatform vir vlerksleep in 2021. Ons is so dankbaar vir wat die app bereik."

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CHRISTIAN LEADERS FORUM

—by Dr Pearl Kupe

The Christian Leaders' Forum was started just over five years ago with founding members Michael Cassidy of African Enterprise and Dr Robin Stephenson. Many conferences and meetings, both physical and virtual, have since been held and many new leaders have joined this group.

The vision

The vision for CLF is for the Church in South Africa to wake up, stand up, and speak up.

The ultimate goal

To ultimate goal is to engage in a process of evangelising and discipling the nation under a consistent ministry of prayer for transformational revival in our beloved country.

Purpose of CLF's existence

The purpose is to strengthen the unity of the Body of Christ – unity in the truth of God's Word. Through advancing Biblical values in society, CLF wants to activate transformational leadership and address key matters such as:

- Marriage and family as the foundation of society;
- The importance of righteousness and justice in governing the nation;
- Building a free and inclusive economy; and
- Keeping the Church informed through good research and advocating for Kingdom messages are essential to helping the Body of Christ play a more active role in society.

The heartbeat of the group

The heartbeat of the group is to awaken the potential of the Church and encourage it to play a defining role in bringing transformation to South Africa. CLF aims to establish a unified leadership function in the Body of Christ to be a transforming catalyst to activate new and co-ordinated initiatives that lead to true transformation in South Africa – Revival and Reformation.

The mandate

The mandate of CLF is to inform and encourage the Body of Christ to speak up on important issues of the day based on Biblical principles so that it leads to social change.

The manifesto

The above information was drawn from the CLF manifesto. The Christian Leadership Forum takes this time to invite other Christian Leaders to fellowship and interact with them. To receive more information on the Christian Leaders Forum, please contact Charlene Pauw on cpauw@ae.org.za. CLF holds monthly online Zoom meetings and discusses topical issues. Key leaders are invited to lead discussions on relevant topics impacting on our nation. The discussions are followed up with robust and lively prayer breakout sessions. We look forward to further engaging with you and invite you to join us.

> **Key leaders are invited to lead discussions on relevant topics impacting on our nation.**

#KeNako

DR PEARL KUPE *is an attorney and consultant to world leaders and international organisations. She is the international president of the Global Forum for Women Entrepreneurs. Email pearl.kupe@gmail.com or visit pearlkupe.co.za or follow her Facebook page, Kingdom Transformer Pearl Kupe*

Join our *G2G* (Generation 2 Generation) women's mentoring group on Clubhouse every Wednesday at 20h00 SAST, and our *The Deborahs 972* mentoring club for female lawyers every Thursday at 20h00 SAST. Search for profile @PearlKupe and follow to get meeting notifications.

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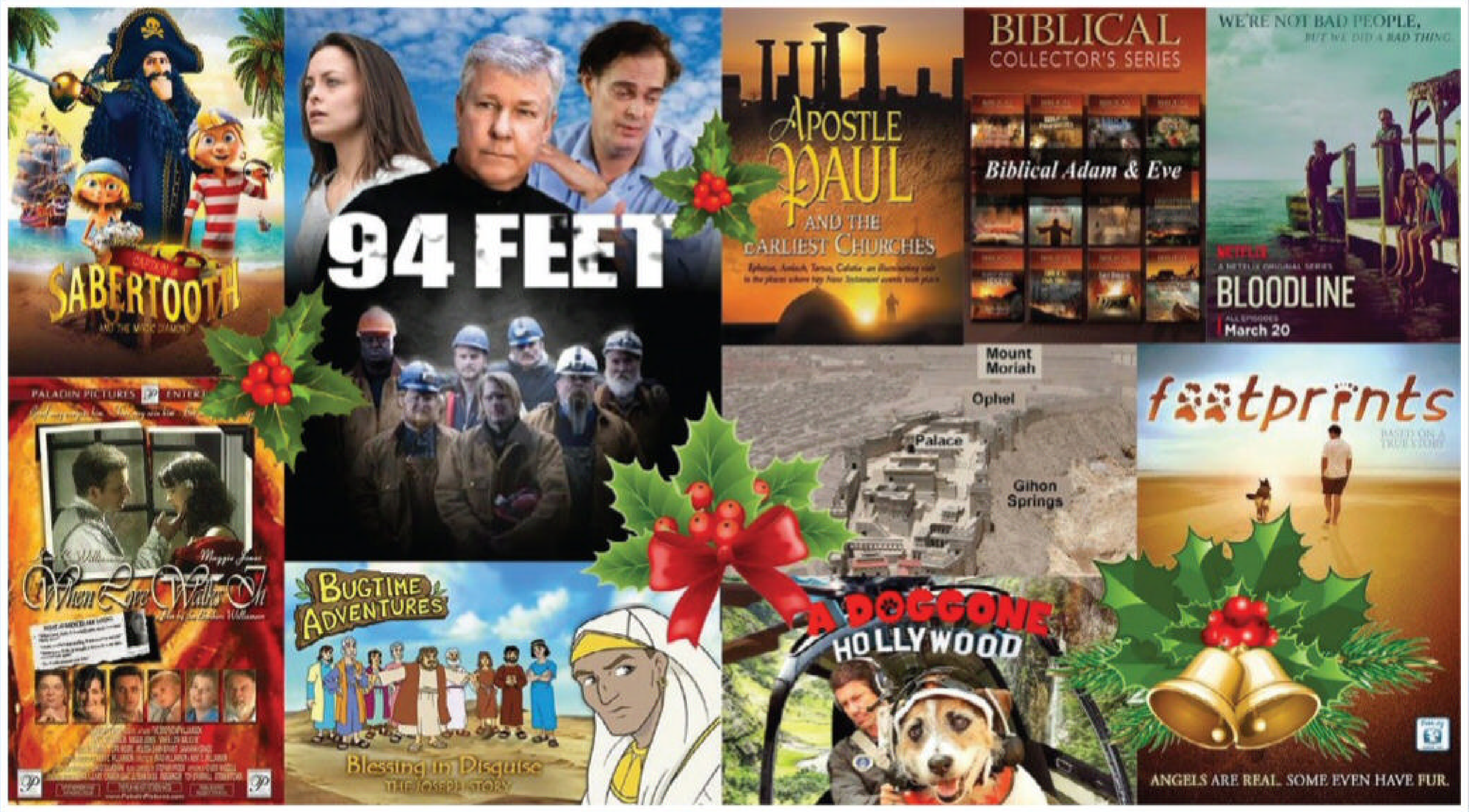
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Schools Face Pressure

To Implement Department's CSE Content

STOP
SCHOOL BUS

—by Michael Swain, FOR SA Executive Director

Parents were up in arms in 2019 when the Department of Basic Education (DBE) revealed that it had developed Scripted Lesson Plans (SLPs) in accordance with the revised UN International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE). Parents and teacher bodies expressed concern about the lack of consultation and engagement, as well as the testing of this content in over 1500 schools with a view to a wide-ranging roll out.

The state says that parents are failing

As the start of the 2022 school year approaches, the DBE is again pushing their CSE content, citing teenage pregnancies, HIV infections, and gender-based violence as the motivation. DBE spokesperson Elijah Mhlanga states that parents are "failing dismally" when it comes to talking to their children about sex and that is "why we need to step up as government".

Parents are the primary educators of their children

The government is empowered to identify and define areas where they believe education is necessary and to set the educational outcomes it wishes every learner to achieve. This is balanced by the right of the School Governing Body (SGB) – representing the parents, teachers and learners of the public school – to choose the content to be taught to meet the curriculum requirements. Of particular importance is the DBE's White Paper, which confirms that parents are the primary educators of their children with the right to be consulted. They have the right to have their children educated according to their values and in what they, as parents, believe to be in the best interests of their children.

What many parents don't know…

A major concern of many parents regarding CSE is that it is impossible for the topic of sex and sexuality to be taught from a value-neutral perspective. What children are taught about sex will have a life-long impact on their own views and values. The SLPs (and other content being tested and promoted by the DBE) have a very liberal bias which conflicts with the values held by many parents and teachers. Parents should therefore take note that the DBE has recently affirmed that, while they are strongly encouraging the use of the SLPs which they developed, these are **not** the only source that teachers and/or schools can use to achieve the mandatory minimum CSE educational outcomes set by CAPS.

Where does this leave us and what is the way forward?

Concerned parents who want a say in the sexuality education content to be taught to their children should become involved in their local SGB and also write to the School Management Team (SMT) to:

1. Alert them to the fact that the DBE's SLPs are not mandatory, and that schools and teachers are free to choose the source / material they want to use to teach the Life Orientation and Life Skills subjects; and

2. Suggest alternative sources of CSE content for teachers to use – for suggestions, contact Cause for Justice (info@causeforjustice.org). ■

FOR SA
FOR FAITH & FREEDOM

FOR SA is a non-profit, legal advocacy organisation dedicated to upholding our constitutional rights to religious freedom, including:

- **Sharing and living out your faith, both in public and in private**
- **Autonomy of religious organisations**
- **Parental rights to raise and teach their own children**

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Kidney Failure, Dialysis, & Eczema

Hilary Jackson's Healing Testimony

—by Oxygen Products

In a time where the world is in desperate need of hope and healing, many who are afflicted are turning away from conventional medications that are not necessarily helping them, and are seeking more natural, healthy, helpful products. It is important to find natural products that you can turn to as your "go to" remedy to boost your wellness, your first line of defence. You need to strengthen your God-given immune system so that you are able to overcome any health problems that you are faced with. Oxygen Products' range is designed to naturally boost your immune system and keep you fit and healthy.

The efficacy of Oxygen Products

Such is the case for Hilary Jackson, a lovely lady who lives in the Western Cape. Hilary's experience with oxygen products is not only life-saving, but has improved her general wellness and overall quality of life. Today, after years of kidney failure, dialysis, eczema, and generally feeling unwell – Hilary boasts in God's faithfulness, and in the wonderful Oxygen Product range that she has been using.

"I am feeling super energetic, where most patients sleep during and after dialysis."

Diagnosed with kidney failure

For more than a decade, Hilary has struggled with her health. "In 2014 I was diagnosed with kidney failure. Prior to which I endured extreme eczema and feeling very unwell. One day I collapsed and was rushed to the hospital, where the above situation was confirmed and I was immediately put on dialysis," Hilary shares. Feeling overwhelmed and unsettled by the medications that she was prescribed, Hilary felt more comfortable taking products that would not leave her feeling defeated. "I sought natural help to assist my condition. Fortunately, I had the knowledge that oxygen is the best source of internal healing. With further research, I discovered a company called *Oxygen Products* who focus on oxygen therapy."

The benefits of oxygen therapy

Oxygen therapy is a unique scientifically proven natural therapy which creates an environment within the body where disease cannot thrive. Decades of research has highlighted the fundamental truth that the primary cause of all diseases is linked in one way or another to oxygen deficiency. When the human body is supplied with abundant amounts of oxygen, cancer cells, harmful bacteria, toxins, viruses, pathogens, and disease micro-organisms are destroyed as they cannot survive in an environment where oxygen levels are high. Oxygen based treatment enables the body to heal itself.

Trying the oxygen products for herself

After doing her research, Hilary reached out for help. "I contacted the owner of Oxygen Products, Venetia Kruger, who advised me on the following products.

"*Mega Oxygen* is a natural immune booster that embraces the body's healing. It is a well-known fact that the greater the oxygen concentration in the bloodstream, the greater the feeling of vitality and the stronger the body's barrier to degenerative diseases. When oxygen levels in the blood drop, illness rises!

"The second product that Venetia recommended is called *Heart Health* – the strongest natural treatment for your heart, arteries, memory, cholesterol and more.

"Another very important product that I am using is called *WaterLife*, which consists of 84 minerals thereby regulating all functions of the body. It nurtures every cell in the body, as well as being perfect for hydration and saturation by neutralising the body."

Seeing immediate results

After taking the products for a little while, Hilary immediately started to see the results and feel better. "I can now confidently confirm that these products have assisted my clearance of toxins of 75% and upwards in comparison to the average 68% and below

> "I sincerely recommend this product for both general optimal health, as well as for chronic illness healing!"

Images for illustrative purposes

previously. I am feeling super energetic, where most patients sleep during and after dialysis. My skin and eyes are brighter and overall well-being has raised dramatically. I sincerely recommend this product for both general optimal health, as well as for chronic illness healing!"

Everyone is a winner!

Ecstatic with her results, Hilary shares, "I wish to add that I tried numerous medicines supplied by Kidney Specialists and other Health Practitioners, to no avail. In conclusion I wish to thank Venetia and her team for talking health and healing to such a great level. Everyone is a WINNER and particularly our bodies, which are exposed to so many possible illnesses. Oxygen products are true therapy for the body and should be recommended as our number one health go to healer!"

A popular resource in South Africa

Demand for the oxygen product range is increasing steadily, with over 480 pharmacies and health shops in South Africa stocking a regular supply. Outstanding results benefiting patients across the spectrum of most health problems, including the foremost diseases plaguing humanity today, has attracted widespread interest among doctors, health practitioners, various institutions, public sector organisations, and the public at large. Visit www.oxygenproducts.org to read more stunning testimonies and to find out more information about this life-changing product. ▪

> "My skin and eyes are brighter and overall well-being has raised dramatically."

HILARY JACKSON *can be contacted on* neutralbay28@gmail.com

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Heart Health
Heart Health™ is a strong natural treatment for the heart, arteries, memory, and more. This product is an oral chelation, made from calcium disodium EDTA, malic acid, garlic, and parsley powder. Once in the blood stream, calcium disodium EDTA will quickly shed its calcium bond and attract toxic heavy metals such as lead or mercury.

Super Vitamins
Super Vitamin is a multi-vitamin that boosts the immune system and increases mental alertness. This product is great for students trying to cram right before finals and is completely natural, containing moringa and oxygen.

Water Life
Water Life is an essential mineral and electrolyte composition that is aimed at bringing any dead water back to life. Our bodies are made up of 80-90% water, and without essential minerals vitamins are useless. The properties of the water we drink are as important as the food we eat.

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or call 021 557 0446

7 Reasons For Owning a Home Stone Mill

Your STAPLE FOOD Solution

—by Johan Jacobs, Go Natural

A staple food is a food that is eaten routinely and in such quantities that it constitutes a dominant portion of a standard diet for a given person. If we consume it daily, we should ensure that it is healthy. Sadly, my research indicates that our staple foods on today's shelves are actually the most refined, nutrient-deficient, and toxic foods. Foods made with refined white flour, in particular, make up a large part of South Africa's staple diet. However, you can produce a healthy alternative yourself!

WHY GET A HOME STONE MILL?

1. It is biblical

The Word of God regards a stone mill as a life-giving and essential item for every household. *"No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone [used to grind grain into bread] in pledge [in debt], for he takes one's living in pledge"* – Deuteronomy 24:6. But why and how does this make sense in our modern dispensation where you can buy milled flour?

> Our Creator did not make a mistake when He created wheat and grain for us.

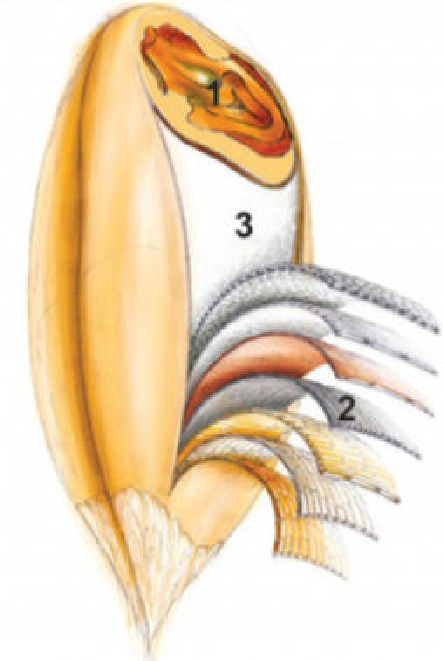
2. It will ensure freshness

How do we define freshness in grain-related foods? The following common-sense principles are non-existent in our society. Many are just blindly following all the marketing propaganda. One needs the truth to make a paradigm shift and face reality.

Use living ingredients for all your grain/flour-related foods

Grain seeds are living (but 'sleeping') plants filled with the full spectrum of naturally occurring nutrients (as illustrated below) to create a healthy seedling and a new plant. My nickname for grains is "Sleeping Beauties" as they are alive and filled with many nutrients, as our ancestors have discovered and used as staple food for millennia. The seed is hermetically sealed and can "sleep" for many years, but will still be alive and full of the nutrients it contained at the time that it was harvested. Just water the seed in the right environment and it will start to sprout, grow, and ultimately reproduce.

Take note: once you mill any grain kernel, you are killing the seed. The living seed is crushed and immediately begins to decay due to our oxygen-rich atmosphere. Secondly, the once-living and whole-grain seed is now literally broken into millions of pieces, which



Whole Grain	Stone-milled		Refined White Flour
	Home	Commercial	
1. GERM: - Vitamins	✓	×	×
- Minerals	✓	×	×
- Amino Acids	✓	×	×
- Essential Fatty Acids	✓	×	×
- Enzymes	✓	×	×
- Antioxidants	✓	×	×
2. BRAN: - Fibre	✓	✓	×
- B-Complex Vitamins	✓	✓	×
- Antioxidants	✓	✓	×
3. ENDOSPERM: - Carbohydrates	✓	✓	✓
Nutritional value retained after milling	100% Full grain kernel	20% Germ removed	10% Germ & Bran removed

exponentially increases the surface area of the fragile and reactive inner parts. Within less than a week most of the essential oils, amino acids (proteins), vitamins, enzymes, and antioxidants will oxidise, due to the exposure to oxygen. This renders the oils and some other parts into a rancid and oxidised state, which makes the flour bitter, inflammatory, and also carcinogenic.

But how do they supply us with flour that can last for years? This brings me to the next reason for having your own mill.

3. It will help you not to be tricked and cheated

Look at the illustration of the grain kernel. With the modern roll milling process they can separate all three parts. For the sake of shelf life, the germ and bran are separated and the endosperm gets milled further to produce white flour. Modern refined foods (bread, pizza, pasta, buns, rusks, etc.) that are made from wheat and maize are highly refined. The end product is high in carbohydrates, but has limited nourishment as approximately 90% of the naturally occurring nutrients have been removed. Every time you are tricked to eat these foods you are carbo-loading with way too much energy that will end up being stored in your body. This is one of the key reasons for the epidemic of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and many high blood sugar-related diseases.

4. It will help you to not be slowly poisoned

Our commercial bread, for instance, possibly contains the following four chemical compounds:

- Herbicide contaminants, i.e. glyphosate
- Pesticides for controlling pests and insects
- Fumigation toxins for long-term storage in the silos
- Preservative (Calcium Propionate) to prevent mould and stretch shelf life to nearly 10 days

> **Refined white flour is high in carbohydrates, but has a limited nutritional value.**

Toxicity is one of the main reasons why people have become so allergic and sensitive to wheat and gluten products. Now you can source clean, organic, and more nutritious grain from a trusted supplier and mill your flour yourself.

5. A delicious, aromatic taste

Freshly milled wholegrain flour contains all the aromatic elements that give all grain foods a delicious taste; one will never go back to buying old refined flour after tasting the real thing.

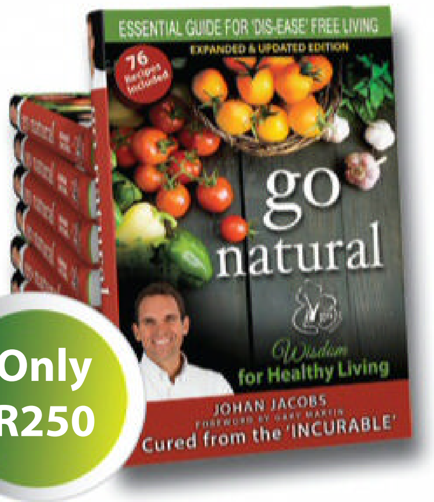
6. Re-skilling society

With your stone mill and our *Go Natural* book, you will be empowered to teach yourself and your children to make homemade traditional sourdough bread, pizza, pasta, etc. Even cake becomes a nourishing food!

7. A home stone mill makes you self-sufficient in troubled times

Our book contains more than 30 recipes that require a stone mill to make fresh flour for a variety of foods. We explain how grain can be stored for decades and still be alive, fresh, and nourishing. Having a home stone mill will help you with your logistical planning to secure your staple food – provided you have stored up a decent supply of living, sleeping beauties.

My stone mill from KoMo is now 17 years old, and it is arguably one of the better practices that I have implemented in our household. With a home stone mill you can enjoy your staple food like our ancestors did hundreds of years ago – and they were not obese nor allergic and they had vitality and strength. ▪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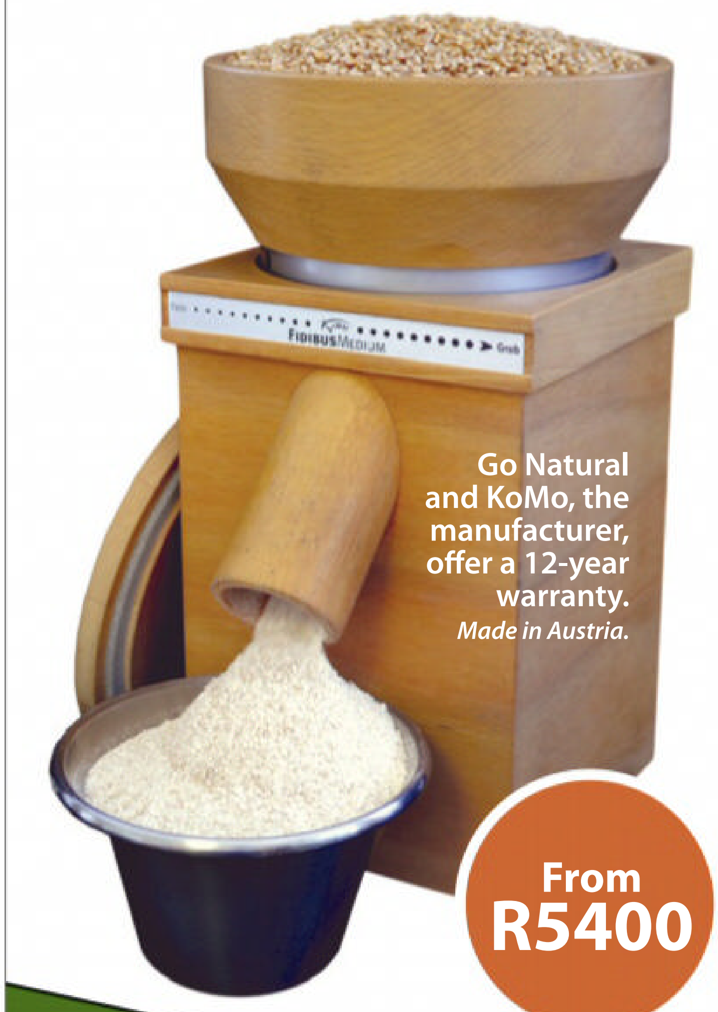

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The Rise of the Micro Entrepreneur

—by Hykie Berg

We all hear it, "Times are tough; people are being retrenched; the economy is in shambles; oh my word the Coronavirus; and so forth." We also hear things like, "Work hard now so that you can enjoy your retirement later; skip that fancy latte in the morning and watch the savings pile up; stay the course and it will all pay off eventually." But let's be honest, traditional methods aren't the *only* way and negativity has never helped anyone to be successful.

The gig economy is here

You don't have to look far to see a growing trend that is breaking traditions and helping people all over the world find some extra income, especially now during these seemingly tough times. There are many opportunities that actually make a difference. There is hope and the only reason why you might not know about these opportunities is because you don't know what you don't know. The gig economy is here, and more and more people are starting to see how working for themselves can start a brand new tradition, one where you have the choice, one where you're in control.

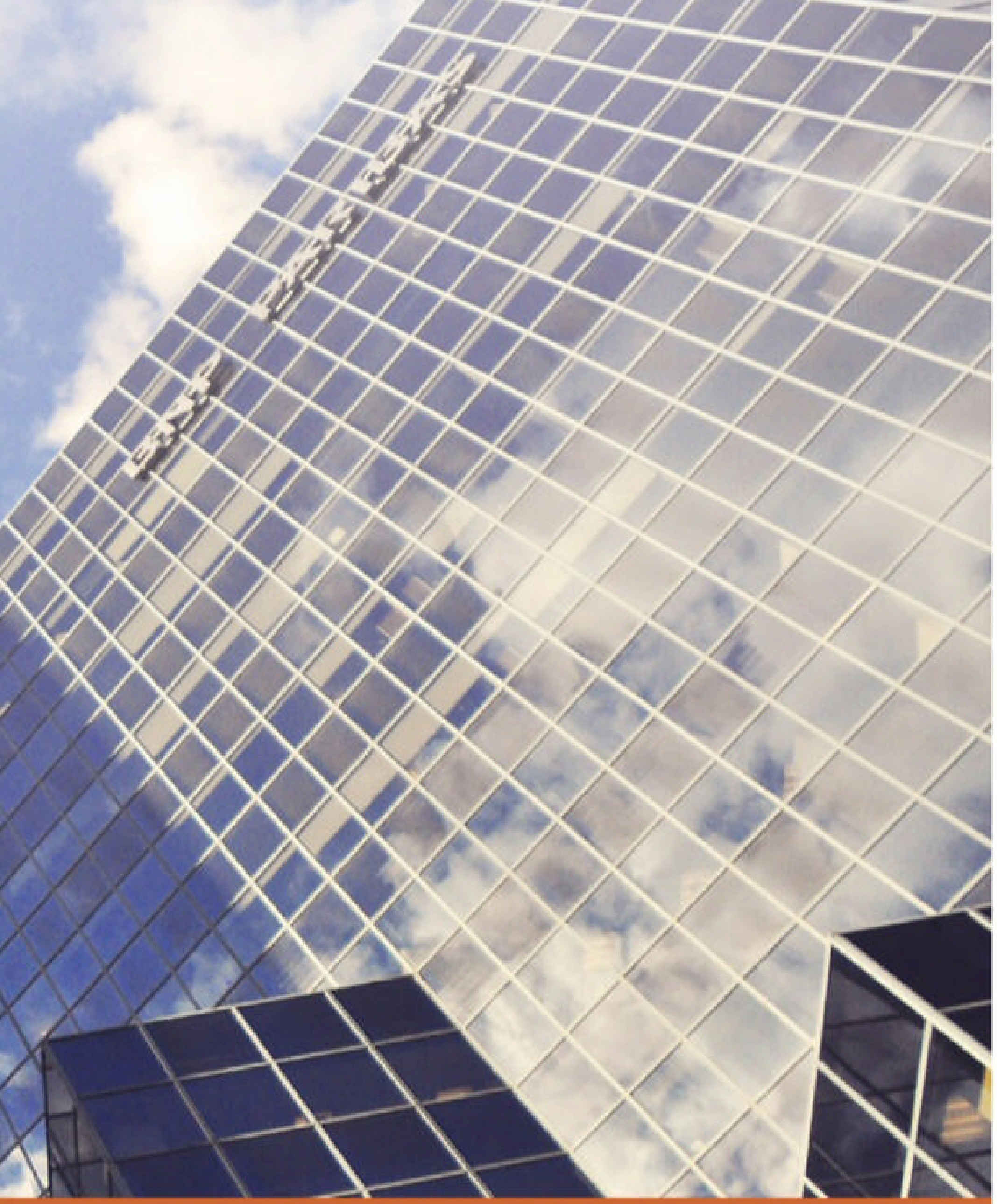
> **This is your chance to become an entrepreneur and find an opportunity.**

What is the 'gig economy'?

You probably already know what the gig economy is. It's simply income earning activities outside of a traditional long term employee relationship. It's an environment where the average Joe can associate themselves with a company, helping and assisting this company to share and distribute their products and services across the world. You don't have to be a tech junkie to be able to do it, there is zero financial risk, its part time, you are your own boss, you decide which hours to work, and all training is done by the company. All systems are already put in place so you never have to worry about things like employees, rent, distribution (it gets done for you), admin, HR, accounts, inventory, etc. You've probably heard of companies like Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, Postmates, Etsy, Amazon reselling, Referral Marketing, and of course Direct Distribution.

Technology continues to make innovation accessible

Did you know that 40% of the current labour force is already involved in the gig economy? And research shows that up to 80% have interest in participating. The gig economy is projected to grow to R455 billion over the next few years, with skyrocketing potential beyond that as technology continues to make innovation accessible. We live in a time where our culture and technology are evolving together to allow us to move past that traditional view of work. Working Monday to Friday, nine to five? How about choosing to work when it's best for you, not answering to a boss all the time. How about creating a space for your own business? And here's the thing about the gig economy – it still comes down to your choice. Let's say that you have your nine to five and you love it. What if you actually like your boss, and just want to be able to save a little extra money each month, pay for an extra bill, or focus on that vacation fund? The gig economy is designed for you and it doesn't have to be overwhelming. This is your chance to become an entrepreneur and find an opportunity that allows you to start down a new path of flexibility and freedom, and start living a different way.



We live in a time where our culture and technology are evolving together to allow us to move past that traditional view of work.

Direct Distribution is a perfect fit

The business model of the 21st Century is here. Direct Distribution is a community who understands innovation and are committed to adding value and personal growth. These companies have proven products that people want and need. They are perfectly placed to harness the power of leverage and exponential growth that will allow you to build an asset based residual (ongoing) income so that you never have to worry about finances ever again. It's a perfect fit. These unique opportunities allow you to create the kind of business and life you want, no matter what your dreams are, all without the risk of a large investment. Direct Distribution can be your bridge to the freedom and flexibility you're looking for, because their leadership will be there to support you every step of the way. You don't need prior experience in business or sales, and above all most of these are established publicly-traded companies with a global brand. It's a business environment where your effort determines your outcome, a place where you're in control, a place for you to create new traditions.

The gig economy is the future and anyone can create success.

Here are a few things you need to look at when looking for an opportunity that will suit you best:

Products:

What kind of products to they sell? Are these products disruptive? Is there real science on the products and do the products have a money back guarantee?

Compensation:

What do their compensation plans look like? How quickly can you get to your financial goals?

Company:

Look at their track record. How long has the company been doing business? Are they ethical? Are they listed as a publicly-traded company? In how many countries do they operate? You want a company that allows you to do business on an international level.

Leadership:

This is probably the most important aspect to look at. Do they care about your success? Do they walk the journey with you? Do they believe in working as a team? What is their commitment to you? How accessible are they to help you get where you want to go?

The time is now!

You can be a part of a community that supports and understand where you have been and what you want to build – a community that truly believes that we can make a difference together. The gig economy is the future and anyone can create success. If you are hungry, teachable, and willing to do the work, you never need to worry about your financial future ever again. This is truly the better way and an opportunity for anyone to change their lives if they so choose. ■

HYKIE BERG *is a South African actor and a Christian business entrepreneur. For more information and advice you are invited to WhatsApp him on 063 668 4837*

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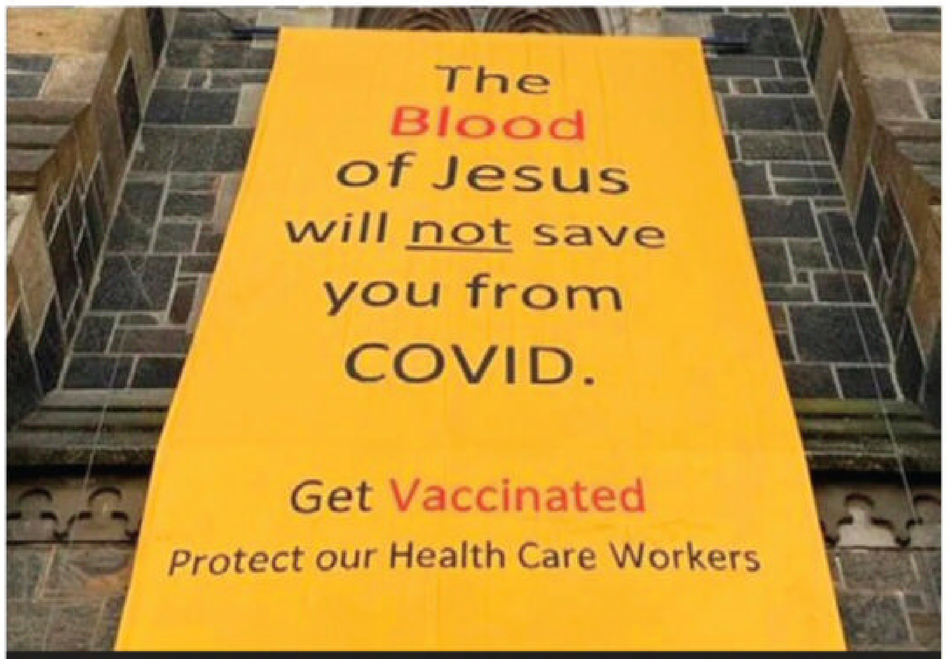
Max Lucado shares health update, credits God for shrinking Aortic Aneurysm

Max Lucado

Pastor and best-selling Christian author Max Lucado shared an encouraging update about his recent "ascending aortic aneurysm" diagnosis. In a YouTube video, Lucado announced that the aneurysm, which was first diagnosed in August, had gotten smaller. "It certainly seemed that surgery was going to be a part of my future. After undergoing a couple of more tests, however, just a few days ago, we were given some surprising and unexpected news," he explained. "The measurement of my aneurysm has actually diminished. No one saw this coming! The medical team credits a more precise test, and they very well may be correct. But I want to be quick to credit a good God who, in this case, is choosing to keep a hand of grace around the aneurysm," Lucado continued. "The bulge is actually reduced to the point that I don't even have to go back to the doctor for a year," he added. "Denalyn and I are so grateful for your prayers, so grateful for our medical team, and, most of all, we are so grateful for our gracious heavenly Father," he concluded. ■

Shocking: Cape Town church raises pro-vaccination banner stating 'The Blood of Jesus will not save you from Covid'



A banner on the steeple of the Central Methodist Mission in Cape Town (PHOTO: News 24)

"The Blood of Jesus will not save you from Covid" says a large yellow banner that was raised last month on the steeple of the Central Methodist Mission, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town. "Get vaccinated. Protect our healthcare workers" continues the banner which forms part of the church's "Yellow banner theology" campaign which it says aims to "engage the public on topical issues from a Gospel perspective". In a Facebook post explaining the purpose of its latest "yellow banner", the church, which is led by Rev Alan Storey, says that "refusing to take life-saving vaccines is a sign of foolishness, not a sign of faithfulness". Public comments below two Facebook posts by the Central Methodist Mission about its banner predominantly denounce the message of the banner, labelling it as blasphemous, unbiblical, and satanic. This banner is not about the vaccine — it is a public declaration which states two blasphemous things: Don't trust in the Lord during this very difficult time and the Blood of Jesus is to no avail. **The Blood of Jesus is the most powerful force in this world.** ■

Upheaval in Sudan as State of Emergency declared – an urgent call for prayer and action

Sudanese protesters take part in a demonstration in the capital Khartoum, demanding the government's resignation over delayed justice and recent harsh economic reforms

After a couple of years of encouraging moves towards freedom in Sudan, on Monday 25th October, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan announced the dissolution of the transitional government and a return to military rule under a "state of emergency." Phone lines were cut. Sudan's internet services were interfered with. There were widespread arrests. Protestors who came out onto the streets were dispersed with gun fire. The main roads and bridges into Khartoum were shut. Soldiers stormed the headquarters of Sudan's state broadcaster in the capital's' twin city of Omdurman. Soldiers reportedly fired live rounds at protestors in the streets. The Transitional Sovereign Council and cabinet have been dissolved by General al-Burhan. Friends in Sudan have requested urgent prayer as their country is on the brink of chaos and civil war. Pray for the many Christians caught up in this unstable situation in Sudan; that they would be steadfast and courageous during this time of uncertainty. ■

The closures are due to Covid and loss of tithes, donations

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Over 360 Church Of England churches at risk of being closed by 2026, church preservation group warns

– Friends of Friendless Churches

Australians are seeing the gov't exercising total control

Australia threatening seizure of homes & bank accounts over Covid violations

– The Activist Post

Worship, prayer, and salvations on roof of Bloemfontein shopping mall

About 400 people gathered to worship Jesus on the roof of the Mimosa Mall in Bloemfontein recently. Christian marketplace leader Dr Arno van Niekerk told Gateway News. There was an amazing atmosphere with people of all ages and races excited about gathering together to worship in the marketplace after the lockdown and a number of people who happened to be at the mall joined the worshipers during the evening, he said. He said about 30 people responded to an invitation to give their hearts to Jesus. The worshipers prayed for church leaders who attended, as well as for the election aftermath, the nation, the municipality, local schools, and businesses. "There was such excitement, as if people were sensing something new in the nation. God is really birthing a nation of worshipers. I believe God is using these kinds of events to unlock the Church — to break the shackles and bring a boldness upon Christians in order to stand up for what we believe," he said. He said he hoped the Bloemfontein event would inspire Christians in other towns and cities to gather and worship. "We need the nation to really come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and us as Christians should step out of our comfort zones. It's easy to worship the Lord in our churches, in our homes, but we need to go to the marketplace. ■

ROOF
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PRAISE &
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Signs of the times?

New York surgeons have successfully attached a kidney that was grown in a genetically altered pig to a human patient – the organ functioned normally

– Just The News

'My Life Song' by Julita Lambrechts will stir your faith

JULITA LAMBRECHTS
My Life Song

Julita Lambrechts (Kok) has just completed an autobiography on the long and eventful road she has travelled with the Lord. Louis Brittz shares, "In this book, Julita journals through every season of her life where God taught her His character. Her faith didn't fall from a tree. God birthed it in her and grew it slowly over time. It is fascinating to read how He taught her lesson after lesson, preparing her for a deeper relationship with Him, greater significance, and a bountiful harvest. The Lord had His hand on Julita and asked difficult things from her. This book shows us what happens when an ordinary person says a radical "yes" to God when He asks for everything. It reads like stories in the Old Testament and sometimes you will think, surely God doesn't speak like that anymore? Surely, He doesn't do those things anymore? Then at the end of those stories, Julita writes that God did many more things, but if she told us, we wouldn't believe it. Whatever you find unbelievable, trust me, the whole truth is even more bizarre! If you need your faith stretched or even rekindled, read this book. If you find it hard to believe that God could love you or use you, read it. It isn't as much Julita's autobiography as it is a biography of the burning love of God for people whom no one else would notice, proven over and over in incredible ways – in this day and age! Even more shocking than her amazing encounters with God is that very few people know and experience Him in this way." The book is available on audienceofonemedia.co.za ■

JULITA LAMBRECHTS

Tens of thousands of people in Malawi indicated their decision to follow Jesus Christ at a massive evangelism campaign

love
MALAWI
FESTIVAL
ANDREW PALAU
BLANTYRE

Tens of thousands of people in Malawi indicated their decision to follow Jesus Christ at a massive evangelism campaign by preachers Andrew and Wendy Palau, organisers say. The "Love Malawi Festival," was organised with more than 2250 local churches across several cities in the East African nation. The clear Good News led "more than 37922 people to indicate a decision to follow Jesus Christ," said the Luis Palau Association (LPA) in a statement. In total, more than 50 evangelistic events took place throughout the region during the two-week campaign. While in Malawi, Andrew and Wendy Palau also gathered with more than 1000 local pastors and church leaders. They said they were "encouraging them in the Word, focusing on continuing in unity, and inspiring them to keep evangelism a top priority." Organisers said local evangelists and believers also helped spread God's "Word in prison outreaches, eyeglass clinics, school assemblies, sports tournaments, and visits to orphanages." They also held "evangelistic dinners for key groups of individuals." The outreach came as the impoverished nation was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as social turmoil and church and tribal divisions, participants noted. "Some of us whose spirits were perhaps smouldering have been truly revived. Hopes shattered by COVID and economic malaise have been revived," said Jimmy Lapunga, a local business leader. "A nation divided along tribal and denominational lines has rediscovered what true love and unity entails. Prisoners in despair have seen their souls being encouraged, and God has certainly deposited something in their spirits with amazing grace," he added. Over the last 25 years, Andrew Palau has played a vital role in the LPA, which was started by his late father, evangelist Luis Palau. ■

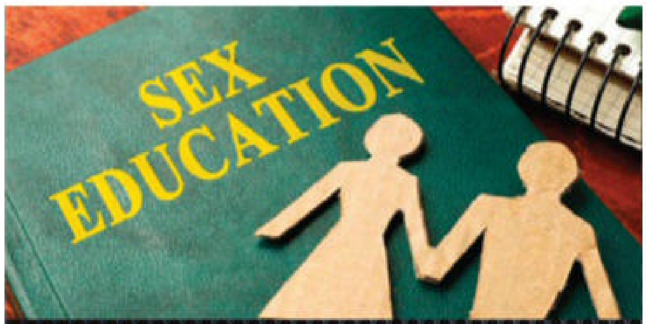
Love Malawi Festival

Digital evangelism pioneer FEBA SA launches new radio station in Malawi

Reaching Malawians with the Gospel through radio

Digital evangelism pioneer FEBA South Africa has recently established a new radio studio, Litala FM, in Blantyre, Malawi. This is the seventh radio station in Africa of this radio and online ministry which is transforming rural villages across the continent through the Gospel. FEBA Malawi manager Reverend Amos Siyabu said the new station was made possible through the contribution of supporters whose backing also enabled the ministry to reinstate staff who were laid off last year. Station manager Bright Sonjera said new listeners were excited about the programmes as churches are closed due to the Covid-19 lockdown, many people have been affected by the virus and they rely on radio as a source of guidance for their daily lives. Through the process the Word is spread to neighbouring villages which gradually leads to the forming of news groups. FEBA South Africa's head office is in Pretoria and it is led by national director Dr Jurie Vermeulen. FEBA recently opened another office in the Groot Brakriver area near Mossel Bay. The ministry spreads the Gospel and inspires people through radio, internet, and other media platforms. ■

Read the full article on page 71



As the start of the 2022 school year approaches, the DBE is again pushing their CSE content, citing teenage pregnancies, HIV infections, and gender-based violence as the motivation

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Brazil's new electoral code allows churches and universities to be used for electoral propaganda

Brazil's new electoral code allows churches and universities to be used for electoral propaganda. The regulation was approved by the House of Representatives. These institutions, which were previously prohibited from receiving political content, will be able to open up to public debate on the issue during elections. Churches and candidates would be freed from accusations of abuse of religious power that have caused many politicians to lose their mandates for just participating in religious events or for having the support of denominations. One example was the cases against federal deputy Franklin and state deputy Márcio José Oliveira, known as missionary Márcio Santiago, determined by the Superior Electoral Court in 2018 because the politicians attended a religious event during election week. The New Electoral Code is now in a Senate committee and, if it undergoes any changes, it must return to the Chamber of Deputies. As it had not been approved and sanctioned before 2 October, the text will not be valid for the 2022 elections. ■

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